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Margery

MARGERY

(GRED)

A TALE OF OLD NUREMBERG

BY

GEORG EBERS

AUTHOR OF "SERAPIS," ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

By CLARA BELL

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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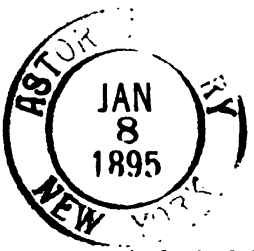

Authorized Edition.

Revised and corrected in the United States.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

In translating what is supposed to be a transcript into modern German of the language of Nuremberg in the fifteenth century, I have made no attempt to imitate English phraseology of the same date. The difficulty would in fact be insuperable to the writer and the annoyance to the reader almost equally great.

I have merely endeavored to avoid essentially modern words and forms of speech.

INTRODUCTION.

"PIETRO GIUSTINIANI, merchant, of Venice." This was the signature affixed to his receipt by the little antiquary in the city of St. Mark, from whom I purchased a few stitched sheets of manuscript. What a name and title!

As I remarked on the splendor of his ancestry he slapped his pocket, and exclaimed, half in pride and half in lamentation:

"Yes, they had plenty of money; but what has become of it?"

"And have you no record of their deeds?" I asked the little man, who himself wore a moustache with stiff military points to it.

"Their deeds!" he echoed scornfully. "I wish they had been less zealous in their pursuit of fame and had managed their money matters better! — Poor child!"

And he pointed to little Marietta who was playing among the old books, and with whom I had already struck up a friendship. She this day displayed some strange appendage in the lobes of her ears, which on closer examination I found to be a twist of thread.

The child's pretty dark head was lying confidentially against my arm and as, with my fingers, I felt this singular ornament, I heard, from behind the little desk at the end of the counter, her mother's shrill voice in complaining accents: "Aye, Sir, it is a shame in a family which has given three saints to the Church — Saint Nicholas, Saint Anna, and Saint Eufemia, all three Giustinianis as you know — in a family whose sons have more than once worn a cardinal's hat — that a mother, Sir, should be compelled to let her own child — But you are fond of the little one, Sir, as every one is hereabout. Heh, Marietta! What would you say if the gentleman were to give you a pair of ear-rings, now; real gold ear-rings I mean? Thread for ear-rings, Sir, in the ears of a Giustiniani! It is absurd, preposterous, monstrous; and a right-thinking gentleman like you, Sir, will never deny that."

How could I neglect such a hint; and when I had gratified the antiquary's wife, I could reflect with some pride that I might esteem myself a benefactor to a family which boasted of its descent from the Emperor Justinian, which had been called the *Fabia gens* of Venice, and, in its day had given to the Republic great generals, far-seeing statesmen, and admirable scholars.

When, at length, I had to quit the city and took leave of the curiosity-dealer, he pressed my hand with heartfelt regret; and though the Signora Giustiniani, as she pocketed a tolerably thick bundle of paper money, looked at me with that kindly pity which a good woman is always ready to bestow on the inexperienced,

especially when they are young, that, no doubt, was because the manuscript I had acquired bore such a dilapidated appearance. The margins of the thick old Nuremberg paper were eaten into by mice and insects, in many places black patches like tinder dropped away from the yellow pages; indeed, many passages of the once clear writing had so utterly faded that I scarcely hoped to see them made legible again by the chemist's art. However, the contents of the document were so interesting and remarkable, so unique in relation to the time when it was written, that they irresistibly riveted my attention, and in studying them I turned half the night into day. There were nine separate parts. All, except the very last one, were in the same hand, and they seemed to have formed a single book before they were torn asunder. The cover and title-page were lost, but at the head of the first page these words were written in large letters: "The Book of my Life." Then followed a long passage in crude verse, very much to this effect.

"What we behold with waking Eye
Can, to our Judgment, never lie,
And what through Sense and Sight we gain.
Becometh part of Soul and Brain.
Look round the World in which you dwell
Nor, Snail-like, live within your Shell;
And if you see His World aright
The Lord shall grant you double Sight.
For, though your Mind and Soul be small,
If you but open them to all
The great wide World, they will expand
Those glorious Things to understand.

When Heart and Brain are great with Love
Man is most like the Lord above.
Look up to Him with patient Eye
Not on your own Infirmity.
In pious Trust yourself forget
For others only toil and fret,
Since all we do for fellow Men
With right good Will, shall be our Gain.
What if the Folk should call you Fool—
Care not, but act by Virtue's Rule,
Contempt and Curses let them fling,
God's Blessing shields you from their Sting.
Grey is my Head but young my Heart;
In Nuremberg, ere I depart,
Children and Grandchildren, for you
I write this Book, and it is true."

MARGERY SCHOPPER.

Below the verses the text of the narrative began with these words: "In the yere of our Lord M/CCCC/lx /VI dyd I begynne to wryte in thys lytel Boke thys storie of my lyf, as I haue lyued it."

It was in her sixty-second year that the writer had first begun to note down her reminiscences. This becomes clear as we go on, but it may be gathered from the first lines on the second page which begins thus: "I, Margery Schopper, was borne in the yere of our Lord M/CCCC/IV on a Twesday after *Palmarum* Sonday, at foure houris after mydnyght. Myn uncle Kristan Pfinzing was god sib to me in my chrystening. My fader, God assoyle his soul, was Franz Schopper, iclyped the Singer. He dyed on a Monday after *Laetare** Sonday M/CCCC/IV. And he hadde

* The fourth Sunday in Lent.

to wyf Kristine Peheym whyche was my moder. Also she bare to hym my brethren Herdegen and Kunz Schopper. My moder dyed in the vigil of Seint Kateryn M/CCCC/V. Thus was I refte of my moder whyle yet a babe; also the Lord broughte sorwe upon me in that of hys grace He callyd my fader out of thys worlde before that ever I sawe the lyght of dai."

These few lines, which I read in the little antiquary's shop, betrayed me to my ruin; for, in my delight at finding the daily journal of a German housewife of the beginning of the fifteenth century my heart overflowed; forgetting all prudence I laughed aloud, exclaiming "splendid," "wonderful," "what a treasure!" But it would have been beyond all human power to stand speechless, for, as I read on, I found things which far exceeded my fondest expectations. The writer of these pages had not been content, like the other chroniclers of her time and of her native town — such as Ulman Stromer, Andres Tucher and their fellows — to register notable facts without any connection, the family affairs, items of expenditure and mercantile measures of her day; she had plainly and candidly recorded everything that had happened to her from her childhood to the close of her life. This Margery had inherited some of her father's artistic gifts; he is mentioned in Ulman Stromer's famous chronicle, where he is spoken of as "the Singer." It was to her mother, however, that she owed her bold spirit, for she was a Behaim, cousin to the famous traveller Behaim of Schwarzbach, whose mother is

known to have been one of the Schopper family, daughter to Herdegen Schopper.

In the course of a week I had not merely read the manuscript, but had copied a great deal of what seemed to me best worth preservation, including the verses. I subsequently had good reason to be glad that I had taken so much pains, though travelling about at the time; for a cruel disaster befel the trunk in which the manuscript was packed, with other books and a few treasures, and which I had sent home by sea. The ship conveying them was stranded at the mouth of the Elbe and my precious manuscript perished miserably in the wreck.

The nine stitched sheets, of which the last was written by the hand of Margery Schopper's younger brother, had found their way to Venice — as was recorded on the last page — in the possession of Margery's great-grandson, who represented the great mercantile house of Im Hoffon the Fondaco, and who ultimately died in the City of St. Mark. When that famous firm was broken up the papers were separated from their cover and had finally fallen into the hands of the curiosity dealer of whom I bought them. And after surviving travels on land, risk of fire, the ravages of worms and the ruthlessness of man for four centuries, they finally fell a prey to the destructive fury of the waves; but my memory served me well as to the contents, and at my bidding was at once ready to aid me in restoring the narrative I had read. The copied portions were a valuable aid, and imagination was able

to fill the gaps; and though it failed, no doubt, to reproduce Margery Schopper's memoirs phrase for phrase and word for word, I have on the whole succeeded in transcribing with considerable exactitude all that she herself had thought worthy to be rescued from oblivion. Moreover I have avoided the repetition of the mode of talk in the fifteenth century, when German was barely commencing to be used as a written language, since scholars, writers, and men of letters always chose the Latin tongue for any great or elegant intellectual work. The narrator's expressions would only be intelligible to a select few, and, I should have done my Margery injustice, had I left the ideas and descriptions, whose meaning I thoroughly understood, in the clumsy form she had given them. The language of her day is a mirror whose uneven surface might easily reflect the fairest picture in blurred or distorted outlines to modern eyes. Much, indeed which most attracted me in her descriptions will have lost its peculiar charm in mine; as to whether I have always supplemented her correctly, that must remain an open question.

I have endeavored to throw myself into the mind and spirit of my Margery and repeat her tale with occasional amplification, in a familiar style, yet with such a choice of words as seems suitable to the date of her narrative. Thus I have perpetuated all that she strove to record for her descendants out of her warm heart and eager brain; though often in mere outline and broken sentences, still, in the language of her time and of her native province.

MARGERY.

CHAPTER I.

I, MARGERY SCHOPPER, was born in the year of our Lord 1404, on the Tuesday after Palm Sunday. My uncle Christan Pfinzing of the Burg, a widower whose wife had been a Schopper, held me at the font. My father, God have his soul, was Franz Schopper, known as Franz the Singer. He died in the night of the Monday after *Laetare* Sunday in 1404, and his wife my mother, God rest her, whose name was Christine, was born a Behaim; she had brought him my two brothers Herdegen and Kunz, and she died on the eve of Saint Catharine's day 1404; so that I lost my mother while I was but a babe, and God dealt hardly with me also in taking my father to Himself in His mercy, before I ever saw the light.

Instead of a loving father, such as other children have, I had only a grave in the churchyard, and the good report of him given by such as had known him; and by their account he must have been a right merry and lovable soul, and a good man of business both in

his own affairs and in those pertaining to the city. He was called "the Singer" because, even when he was a member of the town-council, he could sing sweetly and worthily to the lute. This art he learned in Lombardy, where he had been living at Padua to study the law there; and they say that among those outlandish folk his music brought him a rich reward in the love of the Italian ladies and damsels. He was a well-favored man, of goodly stature and pleasing to look upon, as my brother Herdegen his oldest son bears witness, since it is commonly said that he is the living image of his blessed father; and I, who am now an old woman, may freely confess that I have seldom seen a man whose blue eyes shone more brightly beneath his brow, or whose golden hair curled thicker over his neck and shoulders than my brother's in the high day of his happy youth.

He was born at Eastertide, and the Almighty blessed him with a happy temper such as he bestows only on a Sunday-child. He, too, was skilled in the art of singing, and as my other brother, my playmate Kunz, had also a liking for music and song, there was ever a piping and playing in our orphaned and motherless house, as if it were a nest of mirthful grasshoppers, and more childlike gladness and happy merriment reigned there than in many another house that rejoices in the presence of father and mother. And I have ever been truly thankful to the Almighty that it was so; for as I have often seen, the life of children who lack a mother's love is like a day when the sun is

hidden by storm-clouds. But the merciful God, who laid his hand on our mother's heart, filled that of another woman with a treasure of love towards me and my brothers.

Our cousin Maud, a childless widow, took upon herself to care for us. As a maid, and before she had married her departed husband, she had been in love with my father, and then had looked up to my mother as a saint from Heaven, so she could have no greater joy than to tell us tales about our parents; and when she did so her eyes would be full of tears, and as every word came straight from her heart it found its way straight to ours; and as we three sat round, listening to her, besides her own two eyes there were soon six more wet enough to need a handkerchief.

Her gait was heavy and awkward, and her face seemed as though it had been hewn out of coarse wood, so that it was a proper face to frighten children; even when she was young they said that her appearance was too like a man and devoid of charms, and for that reason my father never heeded her love for him; but her eyes were like open windows, and out of them looked everything that was good and kind and loving and true, like angels within. For the sake of those eyes you forgot all else; all that was rough in her, and her wide nose with the deep dent just in the middle, and such hair on her lip as many a young stripling might envy her.

And Sebald Kresz knew very well what he was about when he took to wife Maud Im Hoff when he

was between sixty and seventy years of age; and she had nothing to look forward to in life as she stood at the altar with him, but to play the part of nurse to a sickly perverse old man. But to Maud it seemed as fair a lot to take care of a fellow-creature as it is to many another to be nursed and cherished; and it was the reward of her faithful care that she could keep the old man from the clutch of Death for full ten years longer. After his decease she was left a well-to-do widow; but instead of taking thought for herself she at once entered on a life of fresh care, for she undertook the duty of filling the place of mother to us three orphans.

As I grew up she would often instruct me in her kind voice, which was as deep as the bass pipe of an organ, that she had set three aims before her in bringing us up, namely: to make us good and Godfearing; to teach us to agree among ourselves so that each should be ready to give everything up to the others; and to make our young days as happy as possible. How far she succeeded in the first I leave to others to judge; but a more united family than we ever were I should like any man to show me, and because it was evident from a hundred small tokens how closely we clung together folks used to speak of us as "the three links," especially as the arms borne by the Schoppers display three rings linked to form a chain.

As for myself, I was the youngest and smallest of the three links, and yet I was the middle one; for if ever it fell that Herdegen and Kunz had done one

thing or another which led them to disagree and avoid or defy each other, they always came together again by seeking me and through my means. But though I thus sometimes acted as peacemaker it is no credit to me, since I did not bring them together out of any virtue or praiseworthy intent, but simply because I could not bear to stand alone, or with only one ring linked to me.

Alas! how far behind me lies the bright, happy youth of which I now write! I have reached the top of life's hill, nay, I have long since overstepped the ridge; and, as I look back and think of all I have seen and known, it is not to the end that I may get wisdom for myself whereby to do better as I live longer. My old bones are stiff and set; it would be vain now to try to bend them. No, I write this little book for my own pleasure, and to be of use and comfort to my children and grandchildren. May they avoid the rocks on which I have bruised my feet, and where I have walked firmly on may they take example by an old woman's brave spirit, though I have learned in a thousand ways that no man gains profit by any experience other than his own.

So I will begin at the beginning.

I could find much to tell of my happy childhood, for then everything seems new; but it profits not to tell of what every one has known in his own life, and what more can a Nuremberg child have to say of her early growth and school life than ever another. The blades in one field and the trees in one wood share the

same lot without any favour. It is true that in many ways I was unlike other children; for my cousin Maud would often say that I would not abide rule as beseems a maid, and Herdegen's lament that I was not born a boy still sounds in my ears when I call to mind our wild games. Any one who knows the window on the first floor, at the back of our house, from which I would jump into the courtyard to do as my brothers did, would be fairly frightened, and think it a wonder that I came out of it with whole bones; but yet I was not always minded to riot with the boys, and from my tenderest years I was a very thoughtful little maid. But there were things in my young life very apt to sharpen my wits.

We Schoppers are nearly allied with every worshipful family in the town, or of a rank to sit in the council and bear a coat of arms; these being, in fact, in Nuremberg, the class answering to the families of the *Signoria* in Venice, whose names are enrolled in the *Libro d'Oro*. What the Barberighi, the Foscari, the Grimaldi, the Giustiniani and the like, are there, the families of Stromer, Behaim, Im Hoff, Tucher, Kresz, Baumgartner, Pfinzing, Pukheimer, Holzschuher, and so forth, are with us; and the Schoppers certainly do not rank lowest on the list. We who hold ourselves entitled to bear arms, to ride in tournaments, and take office in the Church, and who have a right to call ourselves nobles and patricians, are all more or less kith and kin. Wherever in Nuremberg there was a fine house we could find there an uncle and aunt,

cousins and kinsmen, or at least godparents, and good friends of our deceased parents. Wherever one of them might chance to meet us, even if it were in the street, he would say: "Poor little orphans! God be good to the fatherless!" and tears would sparkle in the eyes of many a kindhearted woman. Even the gentlemen of the Council — for most of the elders of our friends were members of it — would stroke my fair hair and look at me as pitifully as though I were some poor sinner for whom there could be no mercy in the eyes of the judges of a court of justice.

Why was it that men deemed me so unfortunate when I knew no sorrow and my heart was as gay as a singing bird? I could not ask cousin Maud, for she was sorely troubled if I had but a finger-ache, and how could I tell her that I was such a miserable creature in the eyes of other folks? But I presently found out for myself why and wherefore they pitied me; for seven who called me fatherless, seventy would speak of me as motherless when they addressed me with pity. Our misfortune was that we had no mother. But was there not Cousin Maud, and was not she as good as any mother? To be sure she was only a cousin, and she must lack something of what a real mother feels.

And though I was but a heedless, foolish child I kept my eyes open and began to look about me. I took no one into the secret but my brothers, and though my elder brother chid me, and bid me only be thankful to our cousin for all her goodness, I nevertheless began to watch and learn.

There were a number of children at the Stromers' house — the Golden Rose was its name — and they were still happy in having their mother. She was a very cheerful young woman, as plump as a cherry, and pink and white like blood on snow; and she never fixed her gaze on me as others did, but would frolic with me or scold me sharply when I did any wrong. At the Muffels, on the contrary, the mistress was dead, and the master had not long after brought home another mother to his little ones, a stepmother, Susan, who was my maid, was wont to call her; and such a mother was no more a real mother than our good cousin — I knew that much from the fairy tales to which I was ever ready to hearken. But I saw this very stepmother wash and dress little Elsie, her husband's youngest babe and not her own, and lull her till she fell asleep; and she did it right tenderly, and quite as she ought. And then, when the child was asleep she kissed it, too, on its brow and cheeks.

And yet Mistress Stromer, of the Golden-Rose-House, did differently; for when she took little Clare that was her own babe out of the water, and laid it on warm clouts on the swaddling board, she buried her face in the sweet, soft flesh, and kissed the whole of its little body all over, before and behind, from head to foot, as if it were all one sweet, rosy mouth; and they both laughed with hearty, loving merriment, as the mother pressed her lips against the babe's white, clean skin and trumpeted till the room rang, or clasped it, wrapped in napkins to her warm breast, as if she could

hug it to death. And she broke into a loud, strange laugh, and cried as she fondled it: "My treasure, my darling, my God-sent jewel! My own, my own — I could eat thee!"

No, Mistress Muffel never behaved so to Elsie, her husband's babe. Notwithstanding I knew right well that Cousin Maud had been just as fond of me as Dame Stromer of her own babes, and so far our cousin was no way different from a real mother. And I said as much to myself, when I laid me down to sleep in my little white bed at night, and my cousin came and folded her hands as I folded mine and, after we had said the prayers for the Angelus together, as we did every evening, she laid her head by the side of mine, and pressed my baby face to her own big face. I liked this well enough, and I whispered in her ear: "Tell me, Cousin Maud, are you not my real, true mother?"

And she hastily replied, "In my heart I am, most truly; and you are a very lucky maid, my Margery, for instead of only one mother you have two: me, here below, to care for you and foster you, and the other up among the angels above, looking down on you and beseeching the all-gracious Virgin who is so nigh to her, to keep your little heart pure, and to preserve you from all ill; nay, perhaps she herself is wearing a glory and a heavenly crown. Look at her face." And Cousin Maud held up the lamp so that the light fell on a large picture. My eyes beheld the lovely portrait in front of me, and meseemed it looked at me with a

deep gaze and stretched out loving arms to me. I sat up in my bed; the feelings which filled my little heart overflowed my lips, and I said in a whisper: "Oh, Cousin Maud! Surely my mammy might kiss me for once, and fondle me as Mistress Stromer does her little Clare."

Cousin Maud set the lamp on the table, and without a word she lifted me out of bed and held me up quite close to the face of the picture; and I understood. My lips softly touched the red lips on the canvas; and, as I was all the happier, I fancied that my mother in Heaven must be glad too.

Then my cousin sighed: "Well, well!" and murmured other words to herself; she laid me in the bed again, tucked the coverlet tightly round me as I loved to have it, gave me another kiss, waited till I had settled my head on the pillow, and whispered: "Now go to sleep and dream of your sainted mother."

She quitted the room; but she had left the lamp, and as soon as I was alone I looked once more at the picture, which showed me my mother in right goodly array. She had a rose on her breast, her golden fillet looked like the crown of the Queen of Heaven, and in her robe of rich, stiff brocade she was like some great Saint. But what seemed to me more heavenly than all the rest was her rose and white young face, and the sweet mouth which I had touched with my lips. Oh if I had but once had the happiness of kissing that mouth in life! A sudden feeling glowed in my heart, and an inward voice told me that a thousand kisses

from Cousin Maud would never be worth one single kiss from that lovely young mother, and that I had indeed lost almost as much as my pitying friends had said. And I could not help sorrowing, weeping for a long time; I felt as though I had lost just what was best and dearest, and for the first time I saw that my good cousin was right ugly as other folks said, and my silly little head conceived that a real mother must be fair to look upon, and that however kind any one else might be she could never be so gracious and lovable.

And so I fell asleep; and in my dreams the picture came towards me out of the frame and took me in her arms as Madonna takes her Holy Child, and looked at me with a gaze as if all the love on earth had met in those eyes. I threw my arms round her neck and waited for her to fondle and play with me like Mistress Stromer with her little Clare; but she gently and sadly shook her head with the golden crownlet, and went up to Cousin Maud and set me in her lap.

I have never forgot that dream, and often in my prayers have I lifted up my heart to my sainted mother, and cried to her as to the blessed Virgin and Saint Margaret, my name-saint; and how often she has heard me and rescued me in need and jeopardy! As to my cousin, she was ever dearer to me from that night; for had not my own mother given me to her, and when folks looked at me pitifully and bewailed my lot, I could laugh in my heart and think: "If only you knew! Your children have only one mother, but we have two; and our own real mother is prettier than

any one's, while the other, for all that she is so ugly, is the best."

It was the compassion of folks that first led me to such thoughts, and as I grew older I began to deem that their pity had done little good to my young soul. Friends are ever at hand to comfort every Job; but few are they who come to share his heaviness, all the more so because all men take pleasure in comparing their own fair lot with the evil lot of others. Compassion — and I am the last to deny it — is a noble and right healing grace; but those who are so ready to extend it should be cautious how they do so, especially in the case of a child, for a child is like a sapling which needs light, and those who darken the sun that shines on it sin against it, and hinder its growth. Instead of bewailing it, make it glad; that is the comfort that befits it.

I felt I had discovered a great and important secret and I was eager to make our sainted mother known to my brothers; but they had found her already without any aid from their little sister. I told first one and then the other all that stirred within me, and when I spoke to Herdegen, the elder, I saw at once that it was nothing new to him. Kunz, the younger, I found in the swing; he flew so high that I thought he would fling himself out, and I cried to him to stop a minute; but, as he clutched the rope tighter and pulled himself together to stand firm on the board, he cried: "Leave me now, Margery; I want to go up, up; up to Heaven — up to where mother is!"

That was enough for me; and from that hour we often spoke together of our sainted mother, and Cousin Maud took care that we should likewise keep our father in mind. She had his portrait — as she had had my mother's — brought from the great dining-room, where it had hung, into the large children's room where she slept with me. And this picture, too, left its mark on my after-life; for when I had the measles, and Master Paul Rieter, the town physician and our doctor, came to see me, he stayed a long time, as though he could not bear to depart, standing in front of the portrait; and when he turned to me again, his face was quite red with sorrowful feeling — for he had been a favorite friend of my father, at Padua — and he exclaimed: "What a fortunate child art thou, little Margery!"

I must have looked at him puzzled enough, for no one had ever esteemed me fortunate, unless it were Cousin Maud or the Waldstromers in the forest; and Master Paul must have observed my amazement, for he went on. "Yea, a happy child art thou; for so are all babes, maids or boys, who come into the world after their father's death." As I gazed into his face, no less astonished than before, he laid the gold knob of his cane against his nose and said: "Remember, little simpleton, the good God would not be what he is, would not be a man of honor — God forgive the words — if he did not take a babe whom He had robbed of its father before it had seen the light or had one proof of his love under His own special care. Mark what I say,

child. Is it a small thing to be the ward of a guardian who is not only Almighty but true above all truth?"

And those words have followed me through all my life till this very hour.

CHAPTER II.

THUS passed our childhood, as I have already said, in very great happiness; and by the time that my brothers had left the leading strings far behind them, and were studying their *Donatus*, Cousin Maud was teaching me to read and write, and that with much mirth and the most frolicsome ways. For instance, she would stamp four copies of each letter out of sweet honey-cakes, and when I knew them well she gave me these tiny little A. B. C. cakes, and one I ate myself, and gave the others to my brothers, or Susan, or my cousin. Often I put them in my satchel to carry them into the woods with me, and give them to my Cousin Götz's favorite hound or his cross-beak; for he himself did not care for sweets. I shall have many things to tell of him and the forest; even when I was very small it was my greatest joy to be told that we were going to the woods, for there dwelt the dearest and most faithful of all our kinsmen: my uncle Waldstromer and his family. The stately hunting-lodge in which he dwelt as head forester of the Lorenzerwald in the service of the Emperor and of our town, had greater joys for me than any other, since not only were there the woods with all their delights and wonders, but also, besides

many hounds, a number of strange beasts, and other pastimes such as a town child knows little of.

But what I most loved was the only son of my uncle and aunt Waldstromer, for whose dog I kept my cake letters; for though Cousin Götz was older than I by eleven years, he nevertheless did not scorn me, but whenever I asked him to show me this or that, or teach me some light woodland craft, he would leave his elders to please me.

When I was six years old I went to the forest one day in a scarlet velvet hood, and after that he ever called me his little "Red riding-hood," and I liked to be called so; and of all the boys and lads I ever met among my brothers' friends or others I deemed none could compare with Götz; my guileless heart was so wholly his that I always mentioned his name in my little prayers.

Till I was nine we had gone out into the forest three or four times in each year to pass some weeks; but after this I was sent to school, and as Cousin Maud took it much to heart, because she knew that my father had set great store by good learning, we paid such visits more rarely; and indeed, the strict mistress who ruled my teaching would never have allowed me to break through my learning for pastime's sake.

Sister Margaret, commonly called the Carthusian nun, was the name of the singular woman who was chosen to be my teacher. She was at once the most pious and learned soul living; she was Prioress of a Carthusian nunnery and had written ten large choir

books, besides others. Though the rule of her order forbade discourse, she was permitted to teach.

Oh, how I trembled when Cousin Maud first took me to the convent.

As a rule my tongue was never still, unless it were when Herdegen sang to me, or thought aloud, telling me his dreams of what he would do when he had risen to be chancellor, or captain-in chief of the Imperial army, and had found a count's or a prince's daughter to carry home to his grand castle. Besides, the wild wood was a second home to me, and now I was shut up in a convent where the silence about me crushed me like a too tight bodice. The walls of the vast ante-chamber, where I was left to wait, were covered with various texts in Latin, and several times repeated were these words under a skull.

"Bitter as it is to live a Carthusian, it is right sweet to die one."

There was a crucifix in a shrine, and so much bright red blood flowed from the Crown of Thorns and the Wounds that the Sacred Body was half covered with it, and I was sore afraid at the sight — oh I can find no words for it! And all the while one nun after another glided through the chamber in silence, and with bowed head, her arms folded, and never so much as lifting an eye to look at me.

It was in May; the day was fine and pleasant, but I began to shiver, and I felt as if the Spring had bloomed and gone, and I had suddenly forgotten how to laugh and be glad. Presently a cat stole in, leapt

on to the bench where I sat, and arched her back to rub up against me; but I drew away, albeit I commonly loved to play with animals; for it glared at me strangely with its green eyes, and I had a sudden fear that it would turn into a werewolf and do me a hurt.

At length the door opened, and a woman in nun's weeds came in with my cousin; she was the taller by a head. I had never seen so tall a woman, but the nun was very thin, too, and her shoulders scarce broader than my own. Ere long, indeed, she stooped a good deal, and as time went on I saw her ever with her back bent and her head bowed. They said she had some hurt of the back-bone, and that she had taken this bent shape from writing, which she always did at night.

At first I dared not look up in her face, for my cousin had told me that with her I must be very diligent, that idleness never escaped her keen eyes; and Götz Waldstromer knew the meaning of the Latin motto with which she began all her writings: "Beware lest Satan find thee idle!" These words flashed through my mind at this moment; I felt her eye fixed upon me, and I started as she laid her cold, thin fingers on my brow and firmly, but not ungently, made me lift my drooping head. I raised my eyes, and how glad I was when in her pale, thin face I saw nothing but true, sweet good will.

She asked me in a low, clear voice, though hardly above a whisper, how old I was, what was my name, and what I had learnt already. She spoke in brief

sentences, not a word too little or too many; and she ever set me my tasks in the same manner; for though, by a dispensation, she might speak, she ever bore in mind that at the Last Day we shall be called to account for every word we utter.

At last she spoke of my sainted parents, but she only said: "Thy father and mother behold thee ever; therefore be diligent in school that they may rejoice in thee. — To-morrow and every morning at seven." Then she kissed me gently on my head, bowed to my cousin without a word, and turned her back upon us. But afterwards, as I walked on in the open air glad to be moving, and saw the blue sky and the green meadows once more, and heard the birds sing and the children at play, I felt as it were a load lifted from my breast; but I likewise felt the tall, silent nun's kiss, and as if she had given me something which did me honor.

Next morning I went to school for the first time; and whereas it is commonly the part of a child's godparents only to send it parcels of sweetmeats when it goes to school, I had many from various kinsfolks and other of our friends, because they pitied me as a hapless orphan.

I thought more of my riches, and how to dispense them, than of school and tasks; and as my cousin would only put one parcel into my little satchel I stuffed another — quite a little one, sent me by rich mistress Grosz, with a better kind of sweeties — into the wallet which hung from my girdle.

On the way I looked about at the folks to see if

they observed how I had got on, and my little heart beat fast as I met my cousin Götz in front of Master Pernhart's brass-smithy. He had come from the forest to live in the town, that he might learn book-keeping under the tax-gatherers. We greeted each other merrily, and he pulled my plait of hair and went on his way, while I felt as if this meeting had brought me good luck indeed.

In school of course I had to forget such follies at once; for among Sister Margaret's sixteen scholars I was far below most of them, not, indeed in stature, for I was well-grown for my years, but in age and learning and this I was to discover before the first hour was past.

Fifteen of us were of the great city families, and this day, being the first day of the school-term, we were all neatly clad in fine woollen stuffs of Florence or of Flanders make, and colored knitted hose. We all had fine lace ruffs round the cuffs of our tight sleeves and the square cut fronts of our bodices; each little maid wore a silken ribbon to tie her plaits, and almost all had gold rings in her ears and a gold pin at her breast or in her girdle. Only one was in a simple garb, unlike the others, and she, notwithstanding her weed was clean and fitting, was arrayed in poor, grey home-spun. As I looked on her I could not but mind me of Cinderella; and when I looked in her face, and then at her feet to see whether they were as neat and as little as in the tale, I saw that she had small ankles and sweet little shoes; and as for her face, I deemed I had

never seen one so lovely and at the same time so strange to me. Yea, she seemed to have come from another world than this that I and the others lived in; for we were light or brown haired, with blue or grey eyes, and healthy red and white faces; while Cinderella had a low forehead and with big dark eyes strange, long, fine silky lashes; and heavy plaits of black hair hung down her back.

Ursula Tetzel was accounted by the lads the comeliest maiden of us all; and I knew full well that the flower she wore in her bodice had been given to her by my brother Herdegen early that morning, because he had chosen her for his "Lady," and said she was the fairest; but as I looked at her beside this stranger I deemed that she was of poorer stuff.

Moreover Cinderella was a stranger to me, and all the others I knew well, but I had to take patience for a whole hour ere I could ask who this fair Cinderella was, for Sister Margaret kept her eye on us, and so long as I was taught by her, no one at any time made so bold as to speak during lessons or venture on any pastime.

At last, in a few minutes for rest, I asked Ursula Tetzel, who had come to the convent school for a year past. She put out her red nether-lip with a look of scorn and said the new scholar had been thrust among us but did not belong to the like of us. Sister Margaret, though of a noble house herself, had forgot what was due to us and our families, and had taken in this grey bat out of pity. Her father was a simple clerk

in the Chancery office and was accountant to the convent for some small wage. His name was Veit Spiesz, and she had heard her father say that the scribe was the son of a simple lute-player and could hardly earn enough to live. He had formerly served in a merchant's house at Venice. There he had wed an Italian woman, and all his children, which were many, had, like her, hair and eyes as black as the devil. For the sake of a "God repay thee!" this maid, named Ann, had been brought to mix with us daughters of noble houses. "But we will harry her out," said Ursula, "you will see!"

This shocked me sorely, and I said that would be cruel and I would have no part in such a matter; but Ursula laughed and said I was yet but a green thing, and turned away to the window-shelf where all the new-comers had laid out their sweetmeats at the behest of the eldest or first of the class; for, by old custom, all the sweetmeats brought by the novices on the first day were in common.

All the party crowded round the heap of sweetmeats, which waxed greater and greater, and I was standing among the others when I saw that the scribe's daughter Ann, Cinderella, was standing lonely and hanging her head by the tiled stove at the end of the room. I forthwith hastened to her, pressed the little packet which Mistress Grosz had given me into her hand — for I had it still hidden in my poke — and whispered to her: "I had two of them, little Ann; make haste and pour them on the heap."

She gave me a questioning look with her great eyes, and when she saw that I meant it truly she nodded, and there was something in her tearful look which I never can forget; and I mind, too, that when I passed the little packet into her hand it seemed that I, and not she, had received the favor.

She gave the sweetmeats she had taken from me to the eldest, and spoke not a word, and did not seem to mark that they all mocked at the smallness of the packet. But soon enough their scorn was turned to glee and praises; for out of Cinderella's parcel such fine sweetmeats fell on to the heap as never another one had brought with her, and among them was a little phial of attar of roses from the Levant.

At first Ann had cast an anxious look at me, then she seemed as though she cared not; but when the oil of roses came to light she took it firmly in her hand to give to me. But Ursula cried out: "Nay. Whatsoever the new-comers bring is for all to share in common!" Notwithstanding, Ann laid her hand on mine, which already held the phial, and said boldly: "I give this to Margery, and I renounce all the rest."

And there was not one to say her nay, or hinder her; and when she refused to eat with them, each one strove to press upon her so much as fell to her share.

When Sister Margaret came back into the room she looked to find us in good order and holding our peace; and while we awaited her Ann whispered to me, as though to put herself right in my eyes: "I had a

packet of sweetmeats; but there are four little ones at home."

Cousin Maud was waiting at the convent gate to take me home. As I was setting forth at good speed, hand in hand with my new friend, she looked at the little maid's plain garb from top to toe, and not kindly. And she made me leave hold, but yet as though it were by chance, for she came between us to put my hood straight. Then she busied herself with my neckkerchief and whispered in my ear: "Who is that?"

So I replied: "Little Ann;" and when she went on to ask who her father might be, I told her she was a scrivener's daughter, and was about to speak of her with hearty good will, when my cousin stopped me by saying to Ann: "God save you child; Margery and I must hurry." And she strove to get me on and away; but I struggled to be free from her, and cried out with the wilful pride which at that time I was wont to show when I thought folks would hinder that which seemed good and right in my eyes: "Little Ann shall come with us."

But the little maid had her pride likewise, and said firmly: "Be dutiful, Margery; I can go alone." At this Cousin Maud looked at her more closely, and thereupon her eyes had the soft light of good will which I loved so well, and she herself began to question Ann about her kinsfolk. The little maid answered readily but modestly, and when my Cousin understood that her father was a certain writer in the Chancery of whom she had heard a good report, she was softer and

more gentle, so that when I took hold again of Ann's little hand she let it pass, and presently, at parting, kissed her on the brow and bid her carry a greeting to her worthy father.

Now, when I was alone with Cousin Maud and gave her to understand that I loved the scribe's little daughter and wished for no dearer friend, she answered gravely; "Little maids can hold no conversation with any but those whose mothers meet in each other's houses. Take patience till I can speak to Sister Margaret." So when my Cousin went out in the afternoon I tarried in the most anxious expectation; but she came home with famous good tidings, and thenceforward Ann was a friend to whom I clung almost as closely as to my brothers. And which of us was the chief gainer it would be hard to say, for whereas I found in her a trusted companion to whom I might impart every thing which was scarce worthy of my brothers' or my Cousin's ears, and foremost of all things my childish good-will for my Cousin Götz and love of the Forest, to her the place in my heart and in our house were as a haven of peace when she craved rest after the heavy duties which, for all she was so young, she had already taken upon herself.

CHAPTER III.

TRUE it is that the class I learnt in at the convent was under the strictest rule, and that my teacher was a Carthusian nun; and yet I take pleasure in calling to mind the years when my spirit enjoyed the benefit of schooling with friendly companions and by the side of my best friend. Nay, even in the midst of the silent dwelling of the speechless Sisters, right merry laughter might be heard during the hours of rest, and in spite of the thick walls of the class-room it reached the nuns' ears. Albeit at first I was stricken with awe, and shy in their presence, I soon became familiar with their strange manner of life, and there was many an one whom I learnt truly to love: with some, too, we could talk and jest right merrily, for they, to be sure, had good ears, and we were not slow in learning the language of their eyes and fingers.

As concerning the rule of silence no one, to my knowledge, ever broke it in the presence of us little ones, save only Sister Renata, and she was dismissed from the convent; yet, as I waxed older, I could see that the nuns were as fain to hear any tidings of the outer life that might find a way into the cloister as though there was nothing they held more dear than the world which they had withdrawn from by their own free choice.

For my part, I have ever been, and remain to the end, one of those least fitted for the Carthusian habit, notwithstanding that Sister Margaret would paint the beatitudes and the purifying power of her Order in fair and tempting colors. In the hours given up to sacred teaching, when she would shed out upon us the overflowing wealth and abundant grace of her loving spirit —insomuch that she won not less than four souls of our small number to the sisterhood—she was wont and glad to speak of this matter, and would say that there was a heavenly spirit living and moving in every human breast. That it told us, with the clear and holy voice of angels, what was divine and true, but that the noise of the world and our own vain imaginings sounded louder and would not suffer us to hear. But that they who took upon them the Carthusian rule and hearkened to it speechless, in a silent home, lending no ear to distant outer voices, but only to those within, would ere long learn to mark the heavenly voice with the inward ear and know its warning. That voice would declare to them the glory and the will of the Most High God, and reveal the things that are hidden in such wise as that even here below he should take part in the joys of paradise.

But, for all that I never was a Carthusian nun, and that my tongue was ever apt to run too freely, I conceive that I have found the Heavenly Spirit in the depths of my own soul and heard its voice; but in truth this has befallen me most clearly, and with most joy, when my heart has been most filled with that worldly

love which the Carthusian Sisters shut out with a hundred doors. And again, when I have been moved by that love towards my neighbor which is called Charity, and wearied myself out for him, sparing nothing that was my own, I have felt those divine emotions plainly enough in my breast.

The Sister bid us to question her at all times without fear, and I was ever the foremost of us all to plague her with communings. Of a certainty she could not at all times satisfy my soul, which thirsted for knowledge, though she never failed to calm it; for I stood firm in the faith, and all she could tell me of God's revelation to man I accepted gladly, without doubt or cavil. She had taught us that faith and knowledge are things apart, and I felt that there could be no more peace for my soul if I suffered knowledge to meddle with faith.

Led by her, I saw the Saviour as love incarnate; and that the love which He brought into the world was still and ever a living thing working after His will, I strove to confess with my thinking mind. But I beheld even the Archbishops and Bishops go forth to battle, and shed the blood of their fellow men with vengeful rage; I saw Pope excommunicate Pope — for the great Schism only came to an end while I was yet at school; peaceful cities in their sore need bound themselves by treaties, under our eyes, for defence against Christian knights and lords. The robber bands of the great nobles plundered merchants on the Emperor's highway, though they were of the same creed, while the citizens strove to seize the strongholds of the

knights. We heard of many more letters of defiance than of peacemaking and friendship. Even the burgesses of our good Christian town — could not the love taught by the Redeemer prevail even among them? And as with the great so with the simple; for was it love alone that reigned among us maidens in a Christian school? Nay, verily; for never shall I forget how that Ursula Tetzel, and in fellowship with her a good half of the others, pursued my sweet, sage Ann, the most diligent and best of us all, to drive her out of our midst; but in vain, thanks to Sister Margaret's upright justice. Nay, the shrewish plotters were fain at last to see the scrivener's daughter uplifted to be our head, and this compelled them to bend their pride before her.

All this and much more I would say to the good Sister; nay, and I made so bold as to ask her whether Christ's behest that we should love our enemy were not too high for attainment by the spirit of man. This made her grave and thoughtful; yet she found no lack of comforting words, and said that the Lord had only showed the way and the end. That men had turned sadly from both; but that many a stream wandered through divers windings from the path to its goal, the sea, before it reached it; and that mankind was wondrous like the stream for, albeit they even now rend each other in bloody fights, the day will come when foe shall offer to foe the palm of peace, and when there shall be but one fold on earth and one Shepherd.

But my anxious questioning, albeit I was but a

child, had without doubt troubled her pure and truthful spirit. It was in Passion week, of the fifth year of my school-life — and ever through those years she had become more bent and her voice had sunk lower, so that many a time we found it hard to hear her — that it fell that she could no longer quit her cell; and she sent me a bidding to go to her bedside, and with me only two of us all: to wit my Ann, and Elsa Ebner, a right good child and a diligent bee in her work.

And it befell that as Sister Margaret on her deathbed bid us farewell for ever, with many a God speed and much good council for the rest likewise, her heart waxed soft and she went on to speak of the love each Christian soul oweth to his neighbor and eke to his enemy. She fixed her eye in especial on me, and confessed with her pale lips that she herself had ofttimes found it hard to love evil-minded adversaries and those whose ways had been contrary to hers, as the law of the Saviour bid her. To those young ones among us who had made their minds up to take the veil she had, ere this, more especially shown what was needful; for their way lay plain before them, to walk as followers of Christ how bitter soever it might be to their human nature; but we were bound to live in the world, and she could but counsel us to flee from hate as the soul's worst foe and the most cunning of all the devils. But an if it should befall that our heart could not be subdued after a brave struggle to love such or such an one, then ought we to strive at least to respect all that was good and praiseworthy in him, inasmuch

as we should ever find something worthy of honor even in the most froward and least pleasing to ourselves.

And these words I have ever kept in mind, and many times have they given me pause, when the hot blood of the Schoppers has bid me stoop and pick up a stone to fling at my neighbor.

No longer than three days after she had thus bidden us to her side, Sister Margaret entered into her rest; she had been our strait but gentle teacher, and her learning was as far above that of most women of her time as the heavens are high; and as her mortal body lay, no longer bent, but at full length in the coffin, the saintly lady, who before she took the vows had been a Countess of Lupfen, belonged, meseemed, to a race taller than ours by a head. A calm, queen-like dignity was on her noble thin face; and, this corpse being the first, as it fell, that I had ever looked on, it so worked on my mind that death, of which I had heretofore been in terror, took the image in my young soul of a great Master to whom we must indeed bow, but who is not our foe.

I never could earn such praise as Ann, who was by good right at our head; notwithstanding I ever stood high. And the vouchers I carried home were enough to content Cousin Maud, for her great wish that her foster-children should out-do others was amply fulfilled by Herdegen, the eldest. He was indeed filled with sleeping learning, as it were, and I often conceived that he needed only fitting instruction and a fair start to wake it up. For even he did not attain his learning

without pains, and they who deem that it flew into his mouth agape are sorely mistaken. Many a time have I sat by his side while he pored over his books, and I could see how he set to work in right earnest when once he had cast away sports and pastime. Thus with three mighty blows he would smite the nail home, which a weaker hand could not do with twenty. For whole weeks he might be idle and about divers matters which had no concern with schooling; and then, of a sudden, set to work; and it would so wholly possess his soul that he would not have seen a stone drop close at his feet.

My second brother, Kunz, was not at all on this wise. Not that he was soft-witted; far from it. His head was as clear as ever another's for all matters of daily life; but he found it hard to learn scholarship, and what Herdegen could master in one hour, it took him a whole livelong day to get. Notwithstanding he was not one of the dunces, for he strove hard with all diligence, and rather would he have lost a night's sleep than have left what he deemed a duty only half done. Thus there were sore half-hours for him in school-time; but he was not therefor to be pitied, for he had a right merry soul and was easily content, and loved many things. Good temper and a high spirit looked out of his great blue eyes; aye, and when he had played some prank which was like to bring him into trouble he had a look in his eyes — a look that might have melted a stone to pity, much more good Cousin Maud.

But this did not altogether profit him, for after that Herdegen had discovered one day how easily Kunz got off chastisement he would pray him to take upon himself many a misdeed which the elder had done; and Kunz, who was soft-hearted, was fain rather to suffer the penalty than to see it laid on his well-beloved brother. Add to this that Kunz was a well-favored, slender youth; but as compared with Herdegen's splendid looks and stalwart frame he looked no more than common. For this cause he had no ill-willers; while our eldest's uncommon beauty in all respects, and his hasty temper, ever ready to boil over for good or evil, brought upon him much ill-will and misliking.

When Cousin Maud beheld how little good Kunz got out of his learning, in spite of his zeal, she was minded to get him a private governor to teach him; and this she did by the advice of a learned doctor of Church-law, Albrecht Fleischmann, the vicar and provost of Saint Sebald's and member of the Imperial council, because we Schoppers were of the parish of Saint Sebald's, to which church Albrecht and Friedrich Schopper, God rest their souls, had attached a rich prebendary endowment.

His Reverence the prebendary Fleischmann, having attended the Council at Costnitz, whither he was sent by the town elders with divers errands to the Emperor Sigismund, who was engaged in a disputation with John Huss the Bohemian schismatic, brought to my cousin's knowledge a governor whose name was Peter Pihringer, a native of Nuremberg. He it was who

brought the Greek tongue, which was not yet taught in the Latin schools of our city, not in our house alone, but likewise into others; he was not indeed at all like the high-souled men and heroes of whom his Plutarch wrote; nay, he was a right pitiable little man, who had learnt nothing of life, though all the more out of books. He had journeyed long in Italy, from one great humanistic doctor to another, and while he had sat at their feet, feeding his soul with learning, his money had melted away in his hands — all that he had inherited from his father, a worthy tavern-keeper and master baker. Much of his substance he had lent to false friends never to see it more, and it would scarce be believed how many times knavish rogues had beguiled this learned man of his goods. At length he came home to Nuremberg, a needy traveller, entering the city by the same gate as that by which Huss had that same day departed, having tarried in Nuremberg on his way to Costnitz and won over divers of our learned scholars to his doctrine. Now, after Magister Peter had written a very learned homily against the said Hans Huss, full of much Greek — of which, indeed, it was reported that it had brought a smile to the dauntless Bohemian's lips in the midst of his sorrow — he found a patron in Doctor Fleischmann, who was well pleased with this tractate, and he thenceforth made a living by teaching divers matters. But he sped but ill, dwelling alone, inasmuch as he would forget to eat and drink and mislay or lose his hardly won wage. Once the town watch had to see him

home because, instead of a book, he was carrying a ham which a gossip had given him; and another day he was seen speeding down the streets with his night-cap on, to the great mirth of the lads and lasses.

Notwithstanding he showed himself no whit unworthy of the high praise wherewith his Reverence the Prebendary had commended him, inasmuch as he was not only a right learned, but likewise a faithful and long-suffering teacher. But his wisdom profited Herdegen and Ann and me rather than Kunz, though it was for his sake that he had come to us; and as, touching this strange man's person, my cousin told me later that when she saw him for the first time she took such a horror of his wretched looks that she was ready to bid him depart and desire the Reverend doctor to send us another governor. But out of pity she would nevertheless give him a trial, and considering that I should ere long be fully grown, and that a young maid's heart is a strange thing, she deemed that a younger teacher might lead it into peril.

At the time when Master Pihringer came to dwell with us, Herdegen was already high enough to pass into the upper school, for he was first in his *ordo*; but our guardian, the old knight Hans Im Hoff, of whom I shall have much to tell, held that he was yet too young for the risks of a free scholar's life in a high school away from home, and he kept him two years more in Nuremberg at the school of the Brethren of the Holy Ghost, albeit the teaching there was not of the best. At any rate Master Pihringer avowed that

in all matters of learning we were out of all measure behind the Italians; and how rough and barbarous was the Latin spoken by the reverend Fathers and taught by them in the schools, I myself had later the means of judging.

Their way of imparting that tongue was in truth a strange thing; for to fix the quantity of the syllables in the learners' mind, they were made to sing verses in chorus, while one of them, on whose head Father Hieronymus would set a paper cap to mark his office, beat the measure with a wooden sword; but what pranks of mischief the unruly rout would be playing all the time Kunz could describe better than I can.

The great and famous works of the Roman chroniclers and poets, which our Master had come to know well in Italy — having besides fine copies of them — were never heard of in the Fathers' school, by reason that those writers had all been mere blind heathen; but, verily, the common school catechisms which were given to the lads for their instruction, contained such foolish and ill-conceived matters, that any sage heathen would have been ashamed of them. The highest exercise consisted of disputations on all manner of subtle and captious questions, and the Latin verses which the scholars hammered out under the rule of Father Jodocus were so vile as to rouse Magister Peter to great and righteous wrath. Each morning, before the day's tasks began, the fine old hymn *Salve Regina* was chanted, and this was much better done in the Brothers' school than in ever another, for those Monks gave

especial heed to the practice of good music. My Herdegen profited much thereby, and he was the foremost of all the singing scholars. He likewise gladly and of his own free will took part in the exercises of the *Alumni*, of whom twelve, called the *Pueri*, had to sing at holy mass, and at burials and festivals, as well as in the streets before the houses of the great city families and other worthy citizens. The money they thus earned served to help maintain the poorer scholars, and to be sure, my brother was ready to forego his share; nay, and a great part of his own pocket-money went to those twelve, for among them were comrades he truly loved.

There was something lordly in my elder brother, and his fellows were ever subject to his will. Even at the shooting matches in sport he was ever chosen captain, and the singing *pueri* soon would do his every behest. Cousin Maud would give them free commons on many a Sunday and holy-day, and when they had well filled their hungry young crops at our table for the coming week of lean fare, they went out with us into the garden, and it presently rang with mirthful songs, Herdegen beating the measure, while we young maids joined in with a will.

For the most part we three: Ann, Elsa Ebner, and I — were the only maids with the lads, but Ursula Tetzel was sometimes with us, for she was ever fain to be where Herdegen was. And he had been diligent enough in waiting upon her ere ever I went to school. There was a giving and taking of flowers and nosegays,

for he had chosen her for his Lady, and she called him her knight; and if I saw him with a red knot on his cap I knew right well it was to wear her color; and I liked all this child's-play myself right well, inasmuch as I likewise had my chosen color: green, as pertaining to my cousin in the forest.

But when I went to the convent-school all this was at an end, and I had no choice but to forego my childish love matters, not only for my tasks' sake, but forasmuch as I discerned that Götz had a graver love matter on hand, and that such an one as moved his parents to great sorrow.

The wench to whom he plighted his love was the daughter of a common craftsman, Pernhart the coppersmith, and when this came to my ears it angered me greatly; nay, and cost me bitter tears, as I told it to Ann. But ere long we were playing with our dollies again right happily.

I took this matter to heart nevertheless, more than many another of my years might have done; and when we went again to the Forest Lodge and I missed Götz from his place, and once, as it fell, heard my aunt lamenting to Cousin Maud bitterly indeed of the sorrows brought upon her by her only son — for he was fully bent on taking the working wench to wife in holy wedlock — in my heart I took my aunt's part. And I deemed it a shameful and grievous thing that so fine a young gentleman could abase himself to bring heaviness on the best of parents for the sake of a low-born maid.

After this, one Sunday, it fell by chance that I went to mass with Ann to the church of St. Laurence, instead of St. Sebald's to which we belonged. Having said my prayer, looking about me I beheld Götz, and saw how, as he leaned against a pillar, he held his gaze fixed on one certain spot. My eyes followed his, and at once I saw whither they were drawn, for I saw a young maid of the citizen class in goodly, nay — in rich array, and she was herself of such rare and wonderful beauty that I myself could not take my eyes off her. And I remembered that I had met the wench erewhile on the feast-day of St. John, and that uncle Christian Pfinzing, my worshipful godfather, had pointed her out to Cousin Maud, and had said that she was the fairest maid in Nuremberg whom they called, and rightly, Fair Gertrude.

Now the longer I gazed at her the fairer I deemed her, and when Ann discovered to me, what I had at once divined, that this sweet maid was the daughter of Pernhart the coppersmith, my child's heart was glad, for if my cousin was without dispute the finest figure of a man in the whole assembly Fair Gertrude was the sweetest maid, I thought, in the whole wide world.

If it had been possible that she could be of yet greater beauty it would but have added to my joy. And henceforth I would go as often as I might to St. Laurence's, and past the coppersmith's house to behold Fair Gertrude; and my heart beat high with gladness when she one day saw me pass and graciously bowed

to my silent greeting, and looked in my face with friendly inquiry.

After this when Götz came to our house I welcomed him gladly as heretofore; and one day, when I made bold to whisper in his ear that I had seen his fair Gertrude, and for certain no saint in heaven could have a sweeter face than hers, he thanked me with a bright look and it was from the bottom of his soul that he said: "If you could but know her faithful heart of gold!"

For all this Götz was dearer to me than of old, and it uplifted me in my own conceit that he should put such trust in a foolish young thing as I was. But in later days it made me sad to see his frank and noble face grow ever more sorrowful, nay, and full of gloom; and I knew full well what pained him, for a child can often see much more than its elders deem. Matters had come to a sharp quarrel betwixt the son and the parents, and I knew my cousin well, and his iron will which was a by-word with us. And my aunt in the Forest was of the same temper; albeit her body was sickly, she was one of those women who will not bear to be withstood, and my heart hung heavy with fear when I conceived of the outcome of this matter.

Hence it was a boon indeed to me that I had my Ann for a friend, and could pour out to her all that filled my young soul with fears. How our cheeks would burn when many a time we spoke of the love which was the bond between Götz and his fair Gertrude. To us, indeed, it was as yet a mystery, but that

it was sweet and full of joy we deemed a certainty. We would have been fain to cry out to the Emperor and the world to take arms against the ruthless parents who were minded to tread so holy a blossom in the dust; but since this was not in our power we had dreams of essaying to touch the heart of my forest aunt, for she had but that one son and no daughter to make her glad, and I had ever been her favorite.

Thus passed many weeks, and one morning, when I came forth from school, I found Götz with Cousin Maud who had been speaking with him, and her eyes were wet with tears; and I heard him cry out:

"It is in my mother's power to drive me to misery and ruin; but no power in heaven or on earth can drive me to break the oath and forswear the faith I have sworn!"

And his cheeks were red, and I had never seen him look so great and tall.

Then, when he saw me, he held out both hands to me in his frank, loving way, and I took them with all my heart. At this he looked into my eyes which were full of tears, and he drew me hastily to him and kissed me on my brow for the first time in all his life, with strange passion; and without another word he ran out of the house-door into the street. My cousin gazed after him, shaking her head sadly and wiping her eyes; but when I asked her what was wrong with my cousin she would give me no tidings of the matter.

The next day we should have gone out to the forest, but we remained at home; Aunt Jacoba would

see no one. Her son had turned his back on his parents' dwelling, and had gone out as a stranger among strangers. And this was the first sore grief sent by Heaven on my young heart.

CHAPTER IV.

MANY of the fairest memories of my childhood are linked with the house where Ann's parents dwelt. It was indeed but a simple home and not to be named with ours — the Schopperhof — for greatness or for riches; but it was a snug nest, and in divers ways so unlike ever another that it was full of pleasures for a child.

Master Spiesz, Ann's father, had been bidden from Venice, where he had been in the service of the Mendel's merchant house, to become head clerk in Nuremberg, first in the Chamber of Taxes, and then in the Chancery, a respectable post of much trust. His father was, as Ursula Tetzel had said in the school, a lute-player; but he had long been held the head and chief of teachers of the noble art of music, and was so greatly respected by the clergy and laity that he was made master and leader of the church choir, and even in the houses of the city nobles his teaching of the lute and of singing was deemed the best. He was a right well-disposed and cheerful old man, of a rare good heart and temper, and of wondrous good devices. When the worshipful town council bid his son Veit Spiesz come back to Nuremberg, the old man must

need fit up a proper house for him, since he himself was content with a small chamber, and the scribe was by this time married to the fair Giovanna, the daughter of one of the *Sensali** or brokers of the German Fondaco, and must have a home and hearth of his own.

The musician, who had as a student dwelt in Venice, hit on the fancy that he would give his daughter-in-law a home in Nuremberg like her father's house, which stood on one of the canals in Venice; so he found a house with windows looking to the river, and which he therefore deemed fit to ease her home-sickness. And verily the Venetian lady was pleased with the placing of her house, and yet more with the old man's loving care for her; although the house was over tall, and so narrow that there were but two windows on each floor. Thus there was no manner of going to and fro in the Spiesz's house, but only up and down. Notwithstanding, the Venetian lady loved it, and I have heard her say that there was no spot so sweet in all Nuremberg as the window seat on the second story of her house. There stood her spinning-wheel and sewing-box; and a bright Venice mirror, which, in jest, she would call "Dame Inquisitive," showed her all that passed on the river and the Fleisch-brücke, for her house was not far from those which stood facing the Franciscan Friars. There she

* Agents who conducted all matters of business between the German and Venetian merchants. Not even the smallest affair was settled without their intervention, on account of the duties demanded by the Republic. The Fondaco was the name of the great exchange established by the Republic itself for the German trade.

ruled in peace and good order, in love and all sweetness, and her children throve even as the flowers did under her hand: roses, auriculas, pinks and pansies; and whosoever went past the house in a boat could hear mirth within and the voice of song. For the Spiesz children had a fine ear for music, both from their grandsire and their mother, and sweet, clear, bell-like voices. My Ann was the queen of them all, and her nightingale's throat drew even Herdegen to her with great power.

Only one of the scribe's children, little Mario, was shut out from the world of sound, for he was a deaf-mute born; and when Ann tarried under our roof, rarely indeed and for but a short while, her stay was brief for his sake; for she tended him with such care and love as though she had been his own mother. Albeit she thereby was put to much pains, these were as nothing to the heartfelt joys which the love and good speed of this child brought her; for notwithstanding he was thus born to sorrow, by his sister's faithful care he grew a happy and thankful creature. Ofttimes my Cousin Maud was witness to her teaching of her little brother, and all Ann did for the child seemed to her so pious and so wonderful, that it broke down the last bar that stood in the way of our close fellowship. And Ann's well-favored mother likewise won my cousin's good graces, albeit she was swift to mark that the Italian lady could fall in but ill with German ways, and in especial with those of Nuremberg, and was ever ready to let Ann bear the burthen of the household.

All our closest friends, and foremost of these my worshipful godfather Uncle Christian Pfinzing, ere long truly loved my little Ann; and of all our fellows I knew of only one who was ill-disposed towards her, and that was Ursula Tetzel, who marked, with ill-cloaked wrath, that my brother Herdegen cared less and less for her, and did Ann many a little courtesy wherewith he had formerly favored her. She could not dissemble her anger, and when my eldest brother waited on Ann on her name day with the *pueri* to give her a *serenata* on the water, whereas, a year agone, he had done Ursula the like honor, she fell upon my friend in our garden with such fierce and cruel words that my cousin had to come betwixt them, and then to temper my great wrath by saying that Ursula was a motherless child, whose hasty ways had never been bridled by a loving hand

As I mind me now of those days I do so with heartfelt thankfulness and joy. To be sure it but ill-pleased our grand-uncle and guardian, the knight Im Hoff, that Cousin Maud should suffer me, the daughter of a noble house, to mix with the low born race of a simple scrivener; but in sooth Ann was more like by far to get harm in our house, among my brethren and their fellows, than I in the peaceful home by the river, where none but seemly speech was ever heard and sweet singing, nor ever seen but labor and good order and content.

Right glad was I to tarry there; but yet how good it was when Ann got leave to come to us for the whole

of Sunday from noon till eventide; when we would first sit and chatter and play alone together, and talk over all we had done in school; thereafter we had my brothers with us, and would go out to take the air under the care of my cousin or of Magister Peter, or abide at home to sing or have merry pastime.

After the *Ave Maria*, the old organist, Adam Heyden, Ann's grand uncle, would come to seek her, and many sweet memories dwell in my mind of that worthy and gifted man, which I might set down were it not that I am Ann's debtor for so many things that made my childhood happy. It was she, for a certainty, who first taught me truly to play; for whereas my dolls, and men-at-arms and shop games, albeit they were small, were in all points like the true great ones, she had but a staff of wood wrapped round with a kerchief which she rocked in her arms for a babe; and when she played a shop game with the little ones, she marked stones and leaves to be their wares and their money, and so found far greater pastime than we when we played with figs and almonds and cloves out of little wooden chests and linen-cloth sacks, and weighed them with brass weights on little scales with a tongue and string. It was she who brought imagination to bear on my pastimes, and many a time has she borne my fancy far enough from the Pegnitz, over seas and rivers to groves of palm and golden fairy lands.

Our fellowship with my brethren was grateful to her as it was to me; but meseems it was a different thing in those early years from what it was in later

days. While I write a certain summer day from that long past time comes back to my mind strangely clear. We had played long enough in our chamber, and we found it too hot in the loft under the roof, where we had climbed on to the beams, which were great, so we went down into the garden. Herdegen had quitted us in haste after noon, and we found none but Kunz, who was shaping arrows for his cross-bow. But he ere long threw away his knife and came to be with us, and as he was well-disposed to Ann as being my friend, he did his best to make himself pleasing, or at least noteworthy in her sight. He stood on his head and then climbed to the top of the tallest fruit-tree and flung down pears, but they smote her head so that she cried out; then he turned a wheel on his hands and feet, and a little more and his shoe would hit her in the face; and when he marked that he was but troubling us, he went away sorrowful, but only to hide behind a bush, and as we went past, to rush out on a sudden and put us in fear by wild shouting.

My eldest brother well-nigh affrighted us more when he presently joined us, for his hair was all unkempt and his looks wild. He was now of an age when men-children deem maids to be weak and unfit for true sport, but nevertheless strive their utmost to be marked and chosen by them. Hence Ursula's good graces, which she had shown right openly, had for a long while greatly pleased him, but by this time he was weary of her and began to conceive that good little Ann, with her nightingale's voice, was more to his liking.

After hastily greeting us, he forthwith made us privy to an evil matter. One of his fellowship, Laurence Abenberger, the son of an apothecary, who was diligent in school, and of a wondrous pious spirit, gave up all his spare time to all manner of magic arts, and albeit he was but seventeen years of age, he had already cast nativities for many folks and for us maids, and had told us of divers ill-omens for the future. This Abenberger, a little fellow of no note, had found in some ancient papers a recipe for discovering treasure, and had told the secret to Herdegen and some other few. To begin, they went at his bidding to the graveyard with him, and there, at the full moon, they poured hot lead into the left eye-hole of a skull and made it into arrow-heads. Yesternight they had journeyed forth as far as Sinterspühel, and there, at midnight, had stood at the cross-roads and shot with these same arrow-heads to the four quarters, to the end that they might dig for treasure wheresoever the shafts might fall. But they found no treasure, but a newly-buried body, and on this had taken to their heels in all haste. Herdegen only had tarried behind with Abenberger, and when he saw that there were deep wounds on the head of the dead man his intent was to carry the tidings to the justices in council; nevertheless he would delay a while, because Abenberger had besought him to keep silence and not to bring him to an evil end. But as he had gone past the school of arms he had learnt that an apprentice was missing, and that it was feared lest he had been waylaid by pillagers, or

had fallen into evil hands; so he now deemed it his plain duty to keep no longer silence concerning the finding of the body, and desired to be advised by me and Ann. While I, for my part, shortly and clearly declared that information must at once be laid before his worship the Mayor, a strange trembling fell on Ann, and notwithstanding she could not say me nay, she was in such fear that grave mischief might overtake Herdegen by reason of his thoughtless deed, that tears ran in streams down her cheeks, and it cost me great pains or ever I could comfort her, so brave and reasonable as she commonly was. But Herdegen was greatly pleased by her too great terrors; and albeit he laughed at her, he called her his faithful, fearful little hare, and stuck the pink he wore in his jerkin into her hair. At this she was soon herself again; she counselled him forthwith to do that it was his duty to do; and when thereafter the authorities had made inquisition, it came to light that our lads had in truth come upon the body of the slain apprentice. And though Herdegen did his best to keep silence as touching Abenberger's evil-doings, they nevertheless came out through other ways, and the poor wight was dismissed from the school.

By the end of two years after this, matters had changed in our household.

The twelve *pueri* had been our guests at dinner, and were in the garden singing merry rounds well known to us, and I joined in, with Ann and Ursula Tetzel. Now, while Herdegen beat the time, his ear was intent on Ann's singing, as though there were

revelation on her lips; and his well-beloved companion, Heinrich Trardorf, who erewhile had, with due modesty, preferred me, Margery, seemed likewise well affected to her singing; and when we ceased he fell into eager talk with her, for he had bewailed to her that, albeit he loved me well, as being the son of simple folk he might never lift up his eyes so high.

Herdegen's eyes rested on the twain with some little wrath; then he hastily got up. He snatched the last of Cousin Maud's precious roses from her favorite bush and gave them to Ursula, and then waited on her as though she were the only maid there present. But ere long her father came to fetch her, and so soon as she had departed, beaming, with her roses, Herdegen hastily came to me and, without deeming Ann worthy to be looked at even, bid me good even. I held his hand and called to her to come to me, to help me hinder him from departing, inasmuch as one of the *pueri* was about to play the lute for the rest to dance. She came forward as an honest maid should, looked up at him with her great eyes, and besought him full sweetly to tarry with us.

He pointed with his hand to Trardorf and answered roughly: "I care not to go halves!" And he turned to go to the gate.

Ann took him by the hand, and without a word of his ways with Ursula, not in chiding but as in deep grief, she said: "If you depart, you do me a hurt. I have no pleasure but when you are by, and what do I care for Heinrich?"

This was all he needed; his eye again met hers with bright looks, and from that hour of our childhood she knew no will but his.

From that hour likewise Ann held off from all other lads, and when he was by it seemed as though she had no eyes nor ears save for him and me alone. To Kunz she paid little heed; yet he never failed to wait on her and watch to do her service, as though she were the daughter of some great lord, and he no more than her page.

Ann freely owned to me that she held Herdegen to be the noblest youth on earth, nor could I marvel, when I was myself of the same mind. What should I know, when I was still but fourteen and fifteen years old, of love and its dangers? I had felt such love for Götz as Ann for my elder brother, and as I had then been glad that my dear Cousin had won the love of so fair a maid as Gertrude, I likewise believed that Ann would some day be glad if Herdegen should plight his troth to a fair damsel of high degree. Hence I did all that in me lay to bring them together whenever it might be, and in truth this befell often enough without my aid; for not music alone was a bond between them, nor yet that Herdegen and I taught her to ride on a horse, on the sandy way behind our horse-stalls — the Greek lessons for which Magister Peter had come into the household were a plea on which they passed many an hour together.

I was slow to learn that tongue; but Ann's head was not less apt than my brother's, and he was eager

and diligent to keep her good speed at the like mark with his own, as she was so quick to apprehend. Thus both were at last forward enough to put Greek into German, and then Magister Peter was bidden to lend them his aid. Now, the change in the worthy man, after eating for four years at our table, was such that many an one would have said it was a miracle. At his first coming to us he himself said he weened he was a doomed son of ill-luck, and he scarce dared look man or woman in the face; and what a good figure he made now, notwithstanding the divers pranks played on his simplicity by my brothers and their fellows, nay, and some whiles by me.

Many an one before this has marked that the god Amor is the best schoolmaster; and when our Magister had learnt to stoop less, nay almost to hold himself straight, when as now, he wore his good new coat with wide hanging sleeves, tight-fitting hose, a well-stiffened, snow-white collar, and even a smart black feather in his *beretta*, when he not alone smoothed his hair but anointed it, all this, in its beginnings, was by reason of his great and true love for my Ann, while she was yet but a child.

My cautious Cousin Maud had, it is true, done the blind god of Love good service; for many a time she would, with her own hand, set some matter straight which the Magister had put on all askew, and on divers occasions would give him a piece of fine cloth, and with it the cost of the tailor's work, in bright new coin wrapped in colored paper. She brought him to

order and to keep his hours, and when grave speech availed not she could laugh at him with friendly mockery, such as hurts no man, inasmuch as it is the outcome of a good heart. Thus it was, that, by the time when Herdegen was to go to the high school at Erfurt, Magister Peter was not strangely unlike other learned men of his standing; and when it fell that he had to discourse of the great masters of learning in Italy, or of the glorious Greek writers, I have seen his eye light up like that of a youth.

Our guardian kept watch over my brothers' speed in learning. The old knight Im Hoff was a somewhat stern man and shy of his kind, but scarce another had such great wealth, or was so highly respected in our town. He was our grand-uncle, as old Adam Heyden was Ann's, and two men less alike it would be hard to find.

When we were bid to pay our devoir to my guardian it was seldom done but with much complaining and churlishness; whereas it was ever a festival to be suffered to go with Ann to the organist's house. He dwelt in a fine lodging high up in the tower above the city, and he could look down from his windows, as God Almighty looks down on the earth from the bright heavens, over Nuremberg, and the fortress on the hill, the wide ring of forest which guards it on the north and east and south, the meadows and villages stretching between the woods, and the walls and turrets of our good city, and the windings of the river Pegnitz.

He loved to boast that he was the first to bid the

sun welcome and the last to bid it good-night; and perchance it was to the light, of which he had so goodly a share, that his spirit owed its ever gay good-cheer. He was ever ready with a jest and some little gift for us children; and, albeit these were of little money's worth, they brought us much joy. And indeed there was never another man in Nuremberg who had given away so many tokens and made so many glad hearts and faces thereby as Adam Heyden. True, indeed, after a short but blessed wedded life he had been left a widower and childless, and had no care to save for his heirs; and yet Gottfried Spiesz, Ann's grandfather, was in the right when he said that he had more children than ever another in Nuremberg, inasmuch as that he was like a father to every lad and maid in the town.

When he walked down the street all the little ones were as glad though they had met Christ the Lord or Saint Nicholas; and as they hung on to his long gown with the left hand, with the right they crammed their mouths with the apples or cakes whereof his pockets seemed never to be empty.

But Master Adam had his weak side, and there were many to blame him for that he was over fond of good liquor. Albeit he did his drinking after a manner of his own, in no unseemly wise. To wit, on certain year-days he would tarry alone in his tower, and his lamp might be seen gleaming till midnight. There he would sit alone, with his wine jar and cup, and he would drink the first and second and third in silence,

to the good speed of Elsa, his late departed wife. After that he began to sing in a low voice, and before each fresh cup as he raised it he cried aloud "*Prosit*, Adam!" and when it was empty: "Heartily thank you, Heyden!"

Thus would he go on till he had drunk out divers jugs, and the tower seemed to be spinning round him. Then to his bed, where he would dream of his Elsa and the good old days, the folks he had loved, his youthful courtships, and all the fine and wondrous things which his lonely drinking bout had brought to his inward eye. Next morning he was faithfully at his duty. Common evenings, which were of no mark to him, he spent with the Spiesz folks in the little house by the river, or else in the Gentlemen's tavern in the Frohnwage; for albeit none met there but such as belonged to the noble families of the town, and learned men, and artists of mark, Adam Heyden the organist was held as their equal and a right welcome guest.

And now as touching our grand-uncle and guardian the Knight Sir Sebald Im Hoff.

Many an one will understand how that my fear of him grew greater after that I one evening by mishap chanced to go into his bed chamber, and there saw a black coffin wherein he was wont to sleep each night, as it were in a bed. It was easy to see in the man himself that some deep sorrow or heavy sin gnawed at his heart, and nevertheless he was one of the stateliest old gentlemen I have met in a long life. His face seemed as though cast in metal, and was of wondrous

fine mould, but deadly and unchangefully pale. His snowy hair fell in long locks over his collar of sable fur, and his short beard, cut in a point, was likewise of a silver whiteness. When he stood up he was much taller than common, and he walked with princelike dignity. For many years he had ceased to go to other folks' houses, nevertheless many others sought him out. In every family of rank, excepting in his own, the Im Hoff family, wherever there was a manchild or a maid growing up they were brought to him; but of them all there were but two who dare come nigh him without fear. These were my brother Herdegen and Ursula Tetzel; and throughout my young days she was the one soul whom mine altogether shut out.

Notwithstanding I must for justice sake confess that she grew up to be a well-favored damsel. Besides this, she was the only offspring of a rich and noble house. She went from school a year before Ann and I did, and after that her father, a haughty and eke a surly man, who had long since lost his wife, her mother, prided himself on giving her such attires as might have beseemed the daughter of a Count or a Prince-Elector. And the brocades and fine furs and costly chains and clasps she wore graced her lofty, round shape exceeding well, and she lorded it so haughtily in them that the worshipful town-council were moved to put forth an order against over much splendor in women's weed.

She was, verily and indeed, the last damsel I could have wished to see brought home as mistress of the "Schopperhof," and nevertheless I knew full well,

before my brother went away to the high school, that our grand uncle was counting on giving her and him to each other in marriage. Master Tetzel likewise would point to them when they stood side by side, so high and goodly, as though they were a pair; and this old man, whose face was as grey and cold and hueless as all about his daughter was bright and gay, would demean himself with utter humbleness and homage to the lad who scarce showed the first down on his lip and chin, by reason that he looked upon him, who was his granduncle's heir, as his own son-in-law.

It was, to be sure, known to many that rich old Im Hoff was minded to leave great endowments to the Holy Church, and meseemed that it was praiseworthy and wise that he should do all that in him lay to gain the prayers of the Blessed Virgin and the dear Saints; for the evil deed which had turned him from a dashing knight into a lonely penitent might well weigh in torment on his poor soul. I will here shortly rehearse all I myself knew of that matter.

In his young days my grand uncle had carried his head high indeed, and deemed so greatly of his scutcheon and his knightly forbears that he scorned all civic dignities as but a small matter. Then, whereas in the middle of the past century all towns were forbid by imperial law to hold tournaments, he went to Court, and had been dubbed knight by the Emperor Charles, and won fame and honor by many a shrewd lance-thrust. His more than common manly beauty gained him favor with the ladies, and since he preferred what

was noble and knightly to all other graces he would wed no daughter of Nuremberg but the penniless child of Baron von Frauentrift. But my grand-uncle had made an evil choice; his wife was high-tempered and filled full of conceits. When princes and great lords came into our city, they were ever ready to find lodging in the great and wealthy house of the Im Hoffs; but then she would suffer them to pay court to her, and grant them greater freedom than becomes the decent honor of a Nuremberg citizen's hearth. Once, then, when my lord the duke of Bavaria lay at their house with a numerous fellowship, a fine young count, who had courted my grand uncle's wife while she was yet a maid, fanned his jealousy to a flame; and, one evening, at a late hour, while his wife was yet not come home from seeing some friends, as it fell he heard a noise and whispering of voices, beneath their lodging, in the courtyard wherein all these folks' chests and bales were bestowed. He rushed forth, beside himself; and whereas he shouted out to the courtyard and got no reply, he thrust right and left at hap-hazard with his naked sword among the chests whence he had heard the voices, and a pitiful cry warned him that he had struck home. Then there came the wailing of a woman; and when the squires and yeomen came forth with torches and lanterns, he could see that he had slain Ludwig Tetzel, Ursula's uncle, a young unwedded man. He had stolen into the courtyard to hold a tryst with the fair daughter of the master-weigher in the Im Hoffs' house of trade, and the loving

pair, in their fear of the master, had not answered his call, but had crept behind the baggage. Thus, by ill guidance, had my grand-uncle become a murderer, and the judges broke their staff over him; albeit, since he freely confessed the deed of death, and had done it with no evil intent, they were content to make him pay a fine in money. But some said that they likewise commanded the hangman to nail up a gallows-cord behind his house door; others, rather, that he had taken upon himself the penance of ever wearing such a cord about his neck day and night.

As touching the Tetzels themselves, they made no claim for blood; and for this he was so thankful to them, all his life through, that he gave them his word that he would name Ursula in his testament; whereas he ever hated the Im Hoffs to the end, after that they, on whom he had brought so much vexation by his wilful and haughty temper, took counsel after the judgment as to whether it behooved them not to strip him of their good old name and thrust him forth from their kinship. Four only, as against three, spoke in his favor, and this his haughty spirit could so ill endure that never an Im Hoff dared cross his threshold, though one and another often strove to win back his favor.

He had little comfort from his wife in his grief, for when he was found guilty of manslaughter she quitted him to return to the Emperor's court at Prague, and there she died after a wild hunt which she had followed in King Wenzel's train, while she was not yet past her youth.

CHAPTER V.

THREE years were past since Herdegen had first gone to the High School, and we had never seen him but for a few weeks at the end of the first year, when he was on his way from Erfurt to Padua. In the letters he wrote from thence there was ever a greeting for Mistress Anna, and often there would be a few words in Greek for her and me; yet, as he knew full well that she alone could crack such nuts, he bid me to the feast only as the fox bid the stork. While he was with us he ever demeaned himself both to me and to her as a true and loving brother, when he was not at the school of arms proving to the amazement of the knights and nobles his wondrous skill in the handling of the sword, which he had got in the High School. And during this same brief while he at divers times had speech of Ursula, but he showed plainly enough that he had lost all delight in her.

He had found but half of what he sought at Erfurt, but deemed that he was ripe to go to Padua; for there, alone, he thought — and Magister Peter said likewise — could he find the true grist for his mill. And when he told us of what he hoped to gain at that place we could but account his judgment good, and wish him good speed and that he might come home

from that famous Italian school a luminary of learning. When, at his departing, I saw that Ann was in no better heart than I was, but looked right doleful, I thought it was by reason of the sickness which for some while past had now and again fallen on her good father. Kunz likewise had quitted school, and he could not complain that learning weighed too heavily on his light heart and merry spirit. He was now serving his apprenticeship in our grand uncle's business, and whereas the traffic was mainly with Venice he was to learn the Italian tongue with all diligence. Our Magister, who was well-skilled in it, taught him therein, and was, as heretofore, well content to be with us. Cousin Maud would never suffer him to depart, for it had grown to be a habit with her to care for him; albeit many an one can less easily suffer the presence of a man who needs help, than of one who is himself of use and service.

Master Peter himself, under pretence of exercising himself in the Italian tongue, would often wait upon Dame Giovanna. We on our part would remember the fable of the Sack and the Ass and laugh; while Ann slipped off to her garret chamber when the Magister was coming; and she could never fail to know of it, for no son of man ever smote so feebly as he with the knocker on the door plate.

Thus the years in which we grew from children into maidens ran past in sheer peace and gladness. Cousin Maud allowed us to have every pastime and delight; and if at times her face was less content, it was only by

reason that I craved to wear a longer kirtle than she deemed fitting for my tender years, or that I proved myself over-rash in riding in the riding school or the open country.

My close friendship with Ann brought me to mark and enjoy many other and better things; and in this I differed from the maidens of some noble families, who, to this day, sit in stalls of their own in church, apart from such as have no scutcheon of arms. But indeed Ann was an honored guest in many a lordly house wherein our school and playmates dwelt.

In summer days we would sometimes go forth to the farm belonging to us Schoppers outside the town, or else to Jörg Stromer our worthy cousin at the mill where paper is made; and at holy Whitsuntide we would ride forth to the farm at Laub, which his sister Dame Anna Borchtlin had by inheritance of her father. Nevertheless, and for all that there was to see and learn at the paper-mill, and much as I relished the good fresh butter and the black home-bread and the lard cakes with which Dame Borchtlin made cheer for us, my heart best loved the green forest where dwelt our uncle Conrad Waldstromer, father to my cousin Götz, who still was far abroad.

Now, since I shall have much to tell of this well-beloved kinsman and of his kith and kin, I will here take leave to make mention that all the Stromers were descended from a certain knight, Conrad von Reichenbach, who erewhile had come from his castle of Kammerstein, hard by Schwabach, as far forth as

Nuremberg. There had he married a daughter of the Waldstromers, and the children and grandchildren, issue of this marriage, were all named Stromer or Waldstromer. And the style Wald — or wood — Stromer is to be set down to the fact that this branch had, from a long past time, heretofore held the dignity of Rangers of the great forest which is the pride of Nuremberg to this very day. But at the end of the last century the municipality had bought the offices and dignities which were theirs by inheritance, both from Waldstromer and eke from Koler the second ranger; albeit the worshipful council entrusted none others than a Waldstromer or a Koler with the care of its woods; and in my young days our Uncle Conrad Waldstromer was chief Forester, and a right bold hunter.

Whensoever he crossed our threshold meseemed as though the fresh and wholesome breath of pine-woods was in the air; and when he gave me his hand it hurt mine, so firm and strong and loving withal was his grip, and that his heart was the same all men might see. His thick, red-gold hair and beard, streaked with snowy white, his light, flax-blue eyes and his green forester's garb, with high tan boots and a cap of otter fur garnished with the feather of some bird he had slain — all this gave him a strange, gladsome, and gaudy look. And as the stalwart man stepped forth with his hanger and hunting-knife at his girdle, followed by his hounds and badger-dogs, other children might have been affrighted, but to me, betimes, there

was no dearer sight than this of the terrible-looking forester, who was besides Cousin Götz's father.

Well, on the second Sunday after Whitsunday, when the apple blossoms were all shed, my uncle came in to town to bid me and Cousin Maud to the forest lodge once more; for he ever dwelt there from one Springtide till the next, albeit he was under a bond to the Council to keep a house in the city. I was nigh upon seventeen years old; Ann was past seventeen already, and I would have expressed my joy as freely as heretofore but that somewhat lay at my heart, and that was concerning my Ann. She was not as she was wont to be; she was apt to suffer pains in her head, and the blood had fled from her fresh cheeks. Nay, at her worst she was all pale, and the sight of her thus cut me to the heart, so I gladly agreed when Cousin Maud said that the little house by the river was doing her a mischief, and the grievous care of her deaf-mute brother and the other little ones, and that she lacked fresh air. And indeed her own parents did not fail to mark it; but they lacked the means to obey the leech's orders and to give Ann the good chance of a change to fresh forest air.

When my uncle had given his bidding, I made so bold as to beseech him with coaxing words that he would bid her go with me. And if any should deem that it was but a light matter to ask of a good-hearted old man that he should harbor a fair young maid for a while, in a large and wealthy house, he will be mistaken, inasmuch as my uncle was wont, at all times and

in all places, to have regard first to his wife's good-will and pleasure.

This lady was a Behaim, of the same noble race as my mother, whom God keep; and what great pride she set on her ancient and noble blood she had plainly proven in the matter of her son's love-match. This matter had in truth no less heavily stricken his father's soul, but he had held his peace, inasmuch as he could never bring himself to play the lord over his wife; albeit he was in other matters a strict and thorough man; nay a right stern master, who ruled the host of foresters and hewers, warders and beaters, bee-keepers and woodmen who were under him with prudence and straitness. And yet my aunt Jacoba was a feeble, sickly woman, who rarely went forth to drink in God's fresh air in the lordly forest, having lost the use of her feet, so that she must be borne from her couch to her bed.

My uncle knew her full well, and he knew that she had a good and pitiful heart and was minded to do good to her kind; nevertheless he said his power over her would not stretch to the point of making her take a scrivener's child into her noble house, and entertaining her as an equal. Thus he withstood my fondest prayers, till he granted so much as that Ann should come and speak for herself or ever he should leave the house.

When she had hastily greeted my cousin and me, and Cousin Maud had told her who my uncle was, she went up to him in her decent way, made him a curtsey,

and held out her hand, no whit abashed, while her great eyes looked up at him lovingly, inasmuch as she had heard all that was good of him from me.

Thereupon I saw in the old forester's face that he was "on the scent" of my Ann — to use his own words — so I took heart again and said: "Well, little uncle?"

"Well," said he slowly and doubtingly. But he presently uplifted Ann's chin, gazed her in the face, and said: "To be sure, to be sure! Peaches get their red cheeks better where we dwell than here among stone walls." And he pulled down his belt and went on quickly, as though he weened that he might have to rue his hasty words: "Margery is to be our welcome guest out in the forest; and if she should bring thee with her, child, thou'lt be welcome."

Nor need I here set down how gladly the bidding was received; and Ann's parents were more than content to let her go. Thenceforth had Cousin Maud, and our house maids, and Beata the tailor-wife, enough on their hands; for they deemed it a pleasure to take care to outfit Ann as well as me, since there were many noble guests at the forest lodge, especially about St. Hubert's day, when there was ever a grand hunt.

Dame Giovanna, Ann's mother, was in truth at all times choicely clad, and she ever kept Ann in more seemly and richer habit than others of her standing; yet she was greatly content with the summer holiday raiment which Cousin Maud had made for us. Likewise, for each of us, a green riding habit, fit for the

forest, was made of good Florence cloth; and if ever two young maids rode out with glad and thankful hearts into the fair, sunny world, we were those maids when, on Saint Margaret's day* in the morning, we bid adieu and, mounted on our saddles, followed Balzer, the old forester, whom my uncle had sent with four men at arms on horseback to attend us, and two beasts of burthen to carry Susan and the "woman's gear."

As we rode forth at this early hour, across the fields, and saw the lark mount singing, we likewise lifted up our voices, and did not stop singing till we entered the wood. Then in the dewy silence our minds were turned to devotion and a Sabbath mood, and we spoke not of what was in our minds; only once — and it seems as I could hear her now — these simple words rose from Ann's heart to her lips: "I am so thankful!"

And I was thankful at that hour, with my whole heart; and as the great hills of the Alps cover their heads with pure snow as they get nearer to heaven, so should every good man or woman, when in some happy hour he feels God's mercy nigh him, deck his heart with pure and joyful thanksgiving.

At last we drew up on a plot shut in by tall trees, in front of a bee-keeper's hut, and while we were there, refreshing on some new milk and the store Cousin Maud had put into our saddle bags, we heard the barking of hounds and a noise of hoofs, and ere long Uncle Conrad was giving us a welcome.

* The 13th July, old style.

He was right glad to let us wait upon him and fell to with a will; but he made us set forth again sooner than was our pleasure, and as we fared farther the old forest rang with many a merry jest and much laughter. To Ann it seemed that my uncle was but now opening her eyes and ears to the mystery of the forest, which Götz had shown me long years ago. How many a bird's pipe did he teach her to know which till now she had never marked! And each had its special significance, for my uncle named them all by their names and described them; whereas his son could copy them so as to deceive the ear, twittering, singing, whistling and calling, each after his kind. To the end that Ann and my uncle should learn to come together closely I put no word into his teaching.

Not till we came to the skirts of the clearing, where the forest lodge came in sight against the screen of trees, was my uncle silent; then, while he lifted me from the saddle, he asked me in a low tone if I had already warned Ann of my aunt's strange demeanor. This I could tell him I had indeed done; nevertheless I saw by his face that he was not easy till he could lead Ann to his wife, and had learnt that the maid had found such favor in her eyes as, in truth, nor he nor I were so bold as to hope. But with what sweet dignity did the clerk's daughter kiss the somewhat stern lady's hand — as I had bidden her, and how modestly, though with due self-respect, did she go through Dame Jacoba's inquisition. For my part I should have lost patience all too soon, if I had thus been questioned touching

matters concerning myself alone; but Ann kept calm till the end, and at the same time she spoke as openly as though the inquisitor had been her own mother. This, in truth, somewhat moved me to fear; for, albeit I likewise cling to the truth, meseemed it showed it a lack of prudence and foresight to discover so freely and frankly all that was poor or lacking in her home; inasmuch as there was much, even there, which could not be better or more seemly in the richest man's dwelling. In truth, to my knowledge there was not the smallest thing in the little house by the river of which a virtuous damsel need feel ashamed. But at night, in our bed-chamber, Ann confessed to me that she had taken it as a favor of fortune that she should be allowed, at once, to lay bare to the great lady who had been so unwilling to open her doors to her, exactly what she was and to whom she belonged.

"To be deemed unworthy of heed by my lady hostess," said she, "would have been hard to bear; but whereas she truly cared to question me, a simple maid, and I have nothing hid, all is clear and plain betwixt us."

My aunt doubtless thought in like manner; for she was a truthful woman, and Ann's honest, firm, and withal gentle way had won her heart. And yet, since she was strait in her opinions, and must deem it unseemly in me and my kinsfolk to receive a maid of lower birth as one of ourselves, she stoutly avowed that Ann's worthy father, as being chief clerk in the Chancery, might claim to be accounted one of the

Council. Never, as she said to my uncle, would she have suffered a workingman's daughter to cross her threshold, whereas she had a large place, not alone at her table but in her heart, for this gentle daughter of a worthy member of the worshipful Council.

And such speech was good to my ears and to my uncle Conrad's; but the best of all was that already, by the end of a week or two, Ann seemed likely to supplant me wholly in the love my aunt had erewhile shown to me; Ann thenceforth was diligent in waiting on the sick lady, and such loving duty won her more and more of my uncle's love, who found his weakly, suffering wife much on his hands, and that in the plainest sense of the words, since, whenever he might be at home, she would allow no other creature to lift her from one spot to another.

Now, whereas Uncle Conrad had taught Ann to mark the divers voices of the forest, so did she open my eyes to the many virtues of my aunt, which, heretofore, I had been wont to veil from my own sight out of wrath at her hardness to my cousin Götz.

Ann, in her compassion and thankfulness, had truly learnt to love her, and she now led me to perceive that she was in many ways a right wise and good woman. Her low, sheltered couch in the peaceful chimney-corner was, as it were, the centre of a wide net, and she herself the spider-wife who had spun it; for in truth her good counsel stretched forth over the whole range of forest, and over all her husband's rough henchmen. She knew the name of every child

in the furthest warders' huts, and never did she suffer one of the forest folks to die unholpen. She was, indeed, forced to see with other eyes and give with other hands than her own, and notwithstanding this she ever gave help where it was most needed, since she chose her messengers well and lent an ear to all who sought her.

She soon found work for us, making us do many a Samaritan-task; and many a time have we marvelled to mark the skill with which she wove her web, and the wisdom coupled with her open-handed bounty.

No one else could have found a place in the great books which she filled with her records; but to her they were so clear that the craft of the most cunning was put to shame when she looked into them. Never a soul, whether master or man, said her nay in the lightest thing, to my knowledge, and this was a plea for the one fault which had hitherto set me against her.

Everything here was new to Ann; and what could be more delightful, what could give me greater joy than to be able to show all that was noteworthy and pleasant, and to me well known, to a well-beloved friend, and to tell her the use and end of each thing. In this two men were ever ready to help me: Uncle Conrad and the young Baron von Kalenbach, a Swabian who had come to be my uncle's disciple and to learn forestry.

This same young Baron was a slender stripling, well-grown and not ill-favored; but it seemed as though his lips were locked, and if a man was fain to

hear the sound of his voice and get from him a "yea" or "nay" there was no way but by asking him a plain question. His eye, on the other hand, was full of speech, and by the time I had been no more than three weeks at the Lodge it told me, as often as it might, that he was deeply in love with me; nay, he told the reverend chaplain in so many words that his first desire was that he might take me home as his wife to Swabia, where he had rich estates.

Never would I have said him yea, albeit I liked him well; nor did I hide it from him; nay indeed, now and again I may have lent him courage, though truly with no evil intent, since I was not ill pleased with the tale his eyes told me. And I was but a young thing then, and wist not as yet that a maid who gives hope to a suitor though she has no mind to hear him, is guilty of a sin grievous enough to bring forth much sorrow and heart-ache. It was not till I had had a lesson which came upon me all too soon, that I took heed in such matters; and the time was at hand when men folks thought more about me than I deemed convenient.

As I have gone so far as to put this down on paper, I, an old woman now, will put aside bashfulness and freely confess that both Ann and I were at that time well-favored and good to look upon.

I was of the greater height and stouter build, while she was more slender and supple; and for gentle sweetness I have never seen her like. I was rose and white, and my golden hair was no whit less fine than

Ursula Tetzel's; but whoso would care to know what we were to look upon in our youth, let him gaze on our portraits, before which each one of you has stood many a time. But I will leave speaking of such foolish things and come now to the point.

Though for most days common wear was good enough at the Forest Lodge, we sometimes had occasion to wear our bravery, for now and again we went forth to hunt with my uncle or with the Junker, on foot or on horseback, or hawking with a falcon on the wrist. There was no lack of these noble birds, and the bravest of them all, a falcon from Iceland beyond seas, had been brought thence by Seyfried Kubbeling of Brunswick. That same strange man, who was my right good friend, had ere now taught me to handle a falcon, and I could help my uncle to teach my friend the art.

I went out shooting but seldom, by reason that Ann loved it not ever after she had hit one of the best hounds in the pack with her arrow; and my uncle must have been well affected to her to forgive such a shot, inasmuch as the dogs were only less near his heart than his closest kin. They had to make up to him for much that he lacked, and when he stood in their midst he saw round him, yelping and barking on four legs, well nigh all that he had thought most noteworthy from his childhood up. They bore names, indeed, of no more than one or two syllables, but each had its sense. They were for the most part the beginning of some word which reminded him of a thing he

cared to remember. First he had, in sport, named some of them after the metrical feet of Latin verse, which had been but ill friends of his in his school days, and in his kennel there was a Troch, Iamb, Spond and Dact, whose full names were Trochee, Iambus, Spondee and Dactyl. Now Spond was the greatest and heaviest of the wolfhounds; Anap, rightly Anapaest, was a slender and swift greyhound; and whereas he found this pastime of names good sport he carried it further. Thus it came to pass that the witless creatures who shared his loneliness were reminders of many pleasant things. One of a pair of fleet bloodhounds which were ever leashed together was named Nick, and the other Syn, in memory that he had been betrothed on the festival of Saint Nicodemus and wedded on Saint Synesius' day. A noble hound called Salve, or as we should say Welcome, spoke to him of the birth of his first born, and every dog in like manner had a name of some signification; thus Ann took it not at all amiss that he should call a fine young setter after her name. There had long been a Gred, short for Margaret.

Nevertheless we spent much more time in seeing the sick to whom my aunt sent us on her errands, than we did in shooting or heron-hawking. She ever packed the little basket we were to carry with her own hands, and there was never a physic which she did not mingle, nor a garment she had not made choice of, nor a victual she had not judged fit for each one it was sent to.

Thus many a time our souls ached to see want and pain lying in darksome chambers on wretched straw, though we earned thanks and true joy when we saw that healing and ease followed in our steps. And whatever seemed to me the most praiseworthy grace in my Aunt Jacoba, was, that albeit she could never hear the hearty thanksgiving of those she had comforted and healed, she nevertheless, to the end of her days, ceased not from caring for the poor folks in the forest like a very mother.

My Ann was never made for such work, inasmuch as she could never endure to see blood or wounds; yet was it in this tending of the sick that I had reason to mark and understand how strong was the spirit of this frail, slender flower.

Since a certain army surgeon, by name Häberlein, had departed this life, there was no leech at the Forest lodge, but my aunt and the chaplain, a man of few words but well trained in good works and a right pious servant of the Lord, were disciples of Galen, and the leech from Nuremberg came forth once a week, on each Tuesday; and since the death of Doctor Paul Rieter, of whom I have made mention, it was his successor Master Ulsenius. His duty it was to attend on the sick mistress, and on any other sick folks if they needed it; and then it was our part to wait on the leech, and my aunt would diligently instruct us in the right way to use healing drugs, or bandages.

The first time we were bidden to a woman who gathered berries, who had been stung in the toe by an

adder; and when I set to work to wash the wound, as my aunt had taught me, Ann turned as white as a linen cloth. And whereas I saw that she was nigh swooning I would not have her help; but she gave her help nevertheless, though she held her breath and half turned away her face. And thus she ever did with sores; but she ever paid the penalty of the violence she did herself. As it fell Master Ulsenius came to the Forest one day when my aunt's waiting-woman had fared forth on a pilgrimage to Vierzehnheiligen, and my uncle likewise being out of the way, the leech called us to him to lend him a helping hand. Then I came to know that a fall unawares with her horse had been the beginning of my aunt's long sickness. She had at that time done her backbone a mischief, and some few months later a wound had broken forth which was part of her hurt.

Now when all was made ready Aunt Jacoba begged of Ann that she should hold the sore closed while Master Ulsenius made the linen bands wet. I remembered my friend's weakness and came close to her, to take her place unmarked; but she whispered: "Nay, leave me," in a commanding voice, so that I saw full well she meant it in earnest, and withdrew without a word. And then I beheld a noble sight; for though she was pale she did as she was bidden, nor did she turn her eyes off the wound. But her bosom rose and fell fast, as if some danger threatened her, and her nostrils quivered, and I was minded to hold out my arms to save her from falling. But she stood firm till

all was done, and none but I was aware of her having defied the base foe with such true valor.

Thenceforth she ever did me good service without shrinking; and whensoever thereafter I had some hateful duty to do which meseemed I might never bring myself to fulfil, I would remember Ann holding my aunt's wound. And out of all this grew the good saying, "They who will, can" — which the children are wont to call my motto.

CHAPTER VI.

SUMMER wore away; the oats in the forest were garnered and the vintage had begun in the vine-lands. It was a right glorious sunny day; and if you ask me at which time of the year forest life is the sweeter, whether in Springtide or in Autumn, I could scarce say.

Aye, it is fair indeed in the woods when Spring comes gaily in. Spring is the very Saviour, as it were, of all the numberless folk, great and small, which grow green and blossom there, wherefore the forest holds festival for his birthday and cradle feast as is but fitting! The fir-tree lights up brighter tips to its boughs, as children do with tapers at Christmastide. Then comes the largesse. It lasts much more than one evening, and the gifts bestowed on all are without number, and bright and various indeed to behold. As a father's tinkling bell brings the children together, so the snowdrop bells call forth all the other flowers. First and foremost comes the primrose, and cowslips — Heaven's keys as we call them — open the gates to all the other children of the Spring. "Come forth, come forth!" the returning birds shout from out the bushes, and silver-grey catkins sprout on every twig. Beech leaves burst off their sharp, brown sheaths and open to the light, as soft as taffety and as green as emeralds.

The other trees follow the example, and so teach their boughs to make a leafy shade against the sun as it mounts higher. Every creature that loves its kind finds a voice under the blossoming May, and the dumb forest is full of the call and answer of thankful and gladsome loving things which have met together, and of sweet tunefulness and songs of bridal joy.

Round nests have come into being in a thousand secret places — in the tree-tops, in the thick greenwood of the bushes, in the reeds of the marsh; ere long young living things are twittering there, the father and mother-birds call each other, singing to be of good cheer, and taking joy in caring for their young. At that season of love, of growth, of unfolding life, meseems, as I walk through the woods, that the loving-kindness of the Most High is more than ever nigh unto me; for the forest is as a church, a glorious cathedral at highest festival, all filled with light and song, and decked in every nook and corner with gay fresh flowers and leafy garlands.

Then all is suddenly hushed. It is summer.

But in Autumn the forest is a banqueting-hall where men must say farewell, but with good cheer, in hope of a happy meeting. All that has lived is hasting to the grave. Nevertheless on some fair days everything wears as it were the face of a friend who holds forth a hand at parting. The wide vaults of the woods are finely bedecked with red and yellow splendor, and albeit the voices of birds are few, albeit the cry of the jay, and the song of the nightingale, and the pipe of

the bull-finch must be mute, the greenwood is not more dumb than in the Spring; the hunter's horn rings through the trees and away far over their tops, with the baying of the hounds, the clapping of the drivers, and the huntsmen shouting the view halloo. Every bright, strong, healthful child of man, then feels himself lord of all that creeps or flies, and his soul is ready to soar from his breast. How pure is the air, how spicy is the scent from the fallen leaves on such an autumn day! In Spring, truly, white and rose-red, blue and yellow chequer the green turf; but now gold and crimson are bright in the tree tops, and on the service trees. The distance is clearer than before, and fine silver threads wave in the air as if to catch us, and keep us in the woods whose beauty is so fast fading.

The sunny autumn air was right full of these threads when on St. Maurice's day* Ann and I went forth to our duty of fetching in the birds which had been caught in the springes set for them

> When birds are early to flock and flee
> Hard and cold will winter be,

saith the woodman's saw; and they had gathered early this year — thrushes and fieldfares; many a time the take was so plentiful that our little wallets could scarce hold them, and among them it was a pity to see many a merry, tuneful red-breast.

The springes were set at short spaces apart on

* September 22d.

either side of two forest paths. I went down one and Ann down the other. They met again nigh to the road leading to the town. Balzer set the snares, and we prided ourselves on which should carry home the greater booty; and when we had done our task as we sat on a grassy seat which the Junker had made for me, we told the tale of birds and thought it right good sport. Nor did we need a squire, inasmuch as Spond, the great hound, would ever follow us.

This day I was certain I had the greater number of birds in my wallet, and I walked in good heart toward the end of the path.

Methought already I had heard the noise of hoofs on the highway, and now the hound sniffed the air, so, being inquisitive, I moved my feet somewhat faster till I caught sight of a horseman, who sprang from his saddle, and leaving his steed, hurried toward the clearing whither Ann must presently come from her side. Thereupon I forced my way through the underwood which hindered me from seeing, and when I presently saw Ann coming and had opened my lips to call, something, meseemed, took me by the throat, and I was fain to stand still as though I had taken root there, and could only lend eye and ear, gasping for breath, to what was doing yonder by the highroad. And verily I knew not whether to rejoice from the bottom of my heart, or to lament and be wroth, and fly forth to put an end to it all.

Nevertheless I stirred not a limb, and my tongue was spell-bound. The heart in my bosom and the

veins in my head beat as though hammers were smiting within; mine eyes were dazed, albeit they could see as well as ever they did, and I espied first, on one side of the clearing, the horseman, who was none other than Herdegen, my well-beloved elder brother, and on the other side thereof Ann carrying her wallet in her hand, and numbering the birds she had taken from the snares, with a contented smile.

But ere I had time to hail the returned traveller a voice rang through the wood—it was my brother's voice, and yet, meseemed it was not; it spoke but one word: "Ann!" And in the long drawn cry there was a ring of heart's delight and lovesick longing such as I had never heard save from the nightingale lover when in the still May nights he courts his beloved. This cry pierced to my heart, even mine; and it brought the color to Ann's face, which had long ceased to be pale. Like a doe which comes forth from a thicket and finds her young grazing in the glade, she lifted her head and looked with brightest eyes away to the high road whence the call had come. Then, though they were yet far asunder, his eyes met hers, and hers met his, and they uplifted their arms, as though some invisible power had moved them both, and flew to meet each other. There was no doubt nor pause; and I plainly perceived that they were borne along as flowers are in a raging torrent; albeit she, or ever she reached him, was overcome by maiden shamefacedness, and her arms fell and her head was bent. But the little bird had ventured too far into the springe, and the fowler

was not the man to let it escape; before Ann could foresee such a deed he had both his arms round her, and she did not hinder him, nay, for she could not. So she clung to him and let him lift up her head and kiss her eyes and then her mouth, and that not once, no, but many a time and again, and so long that I, a sixteen-year-old maid, was in truth affrighted.

There stood I; my knees quaked, and I weened that this which was doing was a thing that beseemed not a pious maid, and that must ill-please the heart of a virtuous daughter's mother; yea, it was a grief to me that it should have been done, and that I knew that of my Ann which she would fain hide from the light. Nevertheless I could not but find a joy in it, and me-seemed it was a cruel act to fetch her away so soon from such sweet bliss.

When presently their lips were free, and at last he spoke a few words to her, methought it was now time for me to greet my brother. I called up all my strength and while I walked toward them my spirit's sense came back to me, for indeed it had altogether left me, and a voice within asked: "What shall come of this?"

He put forth his arm to hold her to him again, and forasmuch as I was abashed to think of coming in to their secret, before I stepped forth from the thicket, I hailed Herdegen by name. And soon I was in his arms; but although that he kissed me lovingly, me-seemed that something strange was on his lips which pleased me not, and I yet remember that I put my kerchief to my mouth to wipe that from it.

And then we walked homeward. Herdegen led his horse by the bridle, and Ann went between him and me and gazed up into his face with shining eyes, for in these two years he had grown in stature and in manhood. She listened wide-eared to all his tidings, but once, when his horse grew restive, so that he turned away from us women-kind she kissed my cheek, but in great haste, as though she would not have him see it. We were gladly welcomed at the forest lodge. How truly my uncle and aunt rejoiced at my brother's home-coming could be seen in their eyes, though the mother, who had banished her own son, was cut to the heart by the sight of such another well-grown youth.

The evening before guests had come to the lodge: his excellency the Lord Justice Wigelois von Wolfstein, and Master Besserer of Ulm. Now we had to make ready in all haste for dinner, and never had Ann made such careful and diligent use of our little mirror. As it fell, we could be alone together for a few minutes only, and had no chance of speaking to each other privily. This was likewise the case at table, and then, as my uncle had prepared for a hunt in the afternoon, in honor of his guests, and as the supper afterwards lasted until midnight, the not over-strong thread of my good patience was not seldom in danger of giving way. But many things were going forward which gave me matter for thought, and increased the distress I already felt. Ann threw herself into the sport with all her heart, and on the way back fell behind with Herdegen

in such wise that they did not reach home till long after the door closed on the last of us.

At supper she nodded to me many times with much contentment; except for that I might have been buried for aught she noted, for she hearkened only to Herdegen's tales as though they were a revelation from above. For his part, he now and again stole a hasty, fiery glance at her; otherwise he of set purpose made a show of having little to do with her. He often lay back as though he were weary; and yet, when their Excellencies questioned him of any matter, he was ever ready with a swift and discreet answer. He had lost nothing of his wonderfully clear and shrewd wit; nevertheless, I was not so much at my ease with him as of old time. When my uncle said in jest that the wise owl from Padua seemed to wear a motley of gay feathers, his intent was plain as soon as one looked at my brother; and in the fine clothes he had chosen to wear at supper the noble lad was less to my mind than in the hunting weed which he had journeyed in, inasmuch as the too great length of the sleeves of his mantle was in his way when eating, and the over-long points to his shoes hindered him in walking.

When, presently, my Aunt Jacoba left the hall that the men might the better enjoy the heady wine and freer speech, we maidens were bound to follow her duteously; but Herdegen signed to me to come apart with him, and now I hoped he would open his heart to me and treat me as he had been wont, as my true and dear brother, whose heart had ever been on the tip of

his tongue. Far from it; he spoke nought but flattery, as "how fair I had grown," and then desired news of Cousin Maud, and Kunz, and our grand-uncle, and at last of Ursula Tetzel, which made me wroth.

I answered him shortly, and asked him whether he had no more than that to say to me. He gazed down at the ground and said to himself: "To be sure, to be sure." But in a minute he went back to his first manner, and when I bid him good-night in anger he put his arm round me and turned me about as if to dance.

I got myself free and went away, up to our chamber, hanging my head. There I found my old Sue, taking off Ann's fine gown; and whereas Ann nodded to me right sweetly and, as I thought, with a secret air, I guessed that it was the waiting-woman who stayed her speech and I sent my nurse away.

Now I should sooner have looked for the skies to fall than for Ann, my heart's closest friend, to keep the secret of what had befallen that very morning; and yet she kept silence.

We were commonly wont to chirp like a pair of crickets while we braided our hair and got into our beds; but this night there was not a sound in the chamber. Commonly we laid us down with a simple "Good night, Margery," "Sleep well, Ann," after we had said our prayers before the image of the Blessed Virgin; but this night my friend held me close in her arms, and as I was about to get into bed she ran to me again and kissed me with much warmth. Whether

I was so loving to her I cannot, at this day, tell; but I remember well that I remained dumb, and my heart seemed to ache with sorrow and pain. I thought myself defrauded, and my true love scorned. Was it possible? Did my Ann trust me no longer, or had she never trusted me?

Nay more. Was she at all such as I had believed, if she could carry on an underhand and forbidden love-making with Herdegen behind my back; and this, Merciful Virgin, peradventure, for years past!

The taper had burnt out. We lay side by side striving to sleep, while distress of mind and a wounded heart brought the tears into my eyes.

Then I heard a strange noise from her bed, and was aware that Ann likewise was weeping, more bitterly and deeply every minute. This pierced the very depths of my soul. Yet I tried to harden my heart till I heard her voice saying: "Margery!"

That was an end of our silence, and I answered "Ann."

Then she sobbed out: "As we came home from the hunt he made me promise never to reveal it, but it is bursting my heart. Oh! Margery, Margery, I ought to hide and bury it in my soul; so he bid me, and nevertheless. . . ."

I sat up on the pillow as if new life had come to me, and cried: "Oh Ann, you can tell me nothing that I know not already, for I saw him dismount and how he embraced you."

And then, before I was aware of her, she leaped up

and was kneeling on her knees by the head of my bed, and her lips were kissing mine, and her cheeks were against my face and her tears running down my cheeks and neck and bosom while she confessed all. In our peaceful little chamber there was a wild outpouring of vows of love and words of fear, of plans for the future, and long tales of how it all had come to pass.

I had with mine own eyes seen it in the bud and, unwittingly indeed, had fostered its growth. How then could I be dismayed when now I beheld the flower?

Their meeting this morning had been as the striking of flint and steel, and if sparks had come of it how could they help it? And I took Ann's word when she said that she would have flown into the arms of her beloved, if father and mother and a hundred more had been standing round to warn her.

All she said that night was full of perfect and joyful assurance, and it took hold of my young soul; and albeit I could not blind myself, but saw that great and sore hindrances stood in the way of my brother's choice, I vowed to myself that I would smooth their path so far as in me lay.

All was now forgotten that I had taken amiss that evening in the returned wanderer; and when I gave Ann a last kiss that night how well I loved her again!

CHAPTER VII.

THE cocks had already crowed before I fell asleep, and when I awoke Ann was sitting in front of the mirror, plaiting her hair. I knew full well what had led her to quit her bed so early, and, as she met her lover at breakfast, her form and face meseemed had gained in beauty, so that I could not take my eyes off from her. My aunt and his Excellency marked the wonderful change which had taken effect in her that night, and the gentleman thenceforth waited closely on Ann and sued for her favor like a young man, in spite of his grey hair, while worthy Master Besserer followed his ensample.

At the first favorable chance I drew Herdegen apart. Ann had already told him that I had been witness to their first meeting again; this indeed pleased him ill, and when I asked him as to how he purposed to demean himself henceforth towards his betrothed, he answered that matters had not gone so far with them; and that until he had taken his Doctor's hood we must keep the secret I had by chance discovered closely hidden from all the good people of Nuremberg; that much water would flow into the sea or ere he could bid me wag my tongue, if our grand-uncle should continue to bear the weight of his years so

bravely. For the present he was one of the happiest of men on earth, and if I loved him I must help him to enjoy his heart's desire, and often see the lovely violet which had bloomed so sweetly for him here in the deep heart of the forest.

His bright young spirit smiled upon my soul once more as it had done long ago. Only his unloving mention of our grand-uncle, who had been as a second father to him, struck to my heart, and this I said to him; adding likewise, that it must be a point of honor with him to give and take rings with Ann, even though it should be in secret.

This he was ready and glad to do; I gave him the gold ring, with a hearty good will, which Cousin Maud had given me for my confirmation, and he put it on his sweetheart's finger that very day, albeit her silver ring was too small for his little finger. So he bid her wear it, and solemnly promised to keep his troth, even without a ring, till the next home-coming; and Ann put her trust in her lover as surely as in rock and iron.

Many were the guests who came to the forest that fair autumn tide; there was no end of hunting and sport of all kinds, and Ann was ever ready and well content to share her lover's fearless delight in the chase; when she came home from the forest the joy of her heart shone more clearly than ever in her eyes; and seeing her then and thus, no man could doubt that she was at the crown and top of human happiness. Albeit, up on that height meseemed a keen wind was blowing, which she did battle with so hardly that

through many a still night I could hear her sighs. Withal she showed a strange selfishness such as I had never before marked in her, which, however, only concerned her lover, with constant unrest when apart from others whom she loved; and all this grieved me, though indeed I could not remedy it.

Strangest of all, as it seemed to me, was it that these twain who erewhile had never spent an hour together without singing, would now pass day after day without a song. But then I remembered how that the maiden nightingale likewise pipes her sweetest only so long as her bosom is full of pining love; but so soon as she has given her heart wholly to her mate, her song grows shorter and less tender.

Not that this pair had as yet gone so far as this; and once, when I gave them warning that they should not forget how to sing, they marvelled at their own neglect, and as thereupon they began to sing it sounded sweeter and stronger than in former days.

Among the youths who at that time enjoyed the hospitality of the Waldstromers, Herdegen's friend, Franz von Welemisl, held the foremost place. He was the son of a Bohemian baron, and his mother, who was dead, had been of one of the noblest families of Hungary. And whereas his name was somewhat hard to the German tongue, we one and all called him simply Ritter Franz or Sir Franz. He was a well made and well favored youth in face and limb, who had found such pleasure in my brother's company at Erfurt that he had gone with him to Padua. His

father's sudden death had taken him home from college sooner than Herdegen, and he was now in mourning weed. He ever held his head a little bowed, and whereas Herdegen, with his brave, splendid manners and his long golden locks, put some folks in mind of the sun, a poet might have likened his friend to the moon, inasmuch as he had the same gentle mien and pale countenance, which seemed all the more colorless for his thick, sheeny black hair which framed it, without a wave or a curl. His voice had a sorrowful note, and it went to my heart to see how loving was his devotion to my brother. He, for his part, was well pleased to find in the young knight the companionship he had erewhile had in the *pueri*.

After the young Bohemian's father had departed this life, the Emperor himself had dubbed his sorrowing son Knight, and nevertheless he was devoid alike of pride and scornfulness. When, with his sad black eyes, he looked into mine, humbly and as though craving comfort, I might easily have lulled my soul with the glad thought that I likewise had opened the door to Love; but then I cared not if I saw him, and I thought of him but coldly, and this gave the lie to such hopes; what I felt was no more than the compassion due to a young man who was alone in the world, without parents or brethren or near kin.

One morning I went to seek Herdegen in the armory and there found him stripped of his jerkin, with sleeves turned up; and with him was the Bohemian, striving with an iron file to remove from my brother's

arm a gold bracelet which was not merely fastened but soldered round his arm. So soon as he saw that I had at once descried the band, though he attempted to hide it with his sleeve, he sought to put off my questioning, at first with a jest and then with wrathful impatience flung on his jerkin and turned his back on me. Forthwith I examined Ritter Franz, and he was led to confess to me that a fair Italian Marchesa had prevailed on Herdegen to have this armlet riveted on to his arm in token of his ever true service.

On learning this I was moved to great dread both for my brother's sake and for Ann's; and when I presently upbraided him for his breach of faith he threw his arms round me with his wonted outrageous humor and boisterous spirit, and said: What more would I have, since that I had seen with my own eyes that he was trying to be quit of that bond? To get at the Marchesa he would need to cross a score of rivers and streams; and even in our virtuous town of Nuremberg it was the rule that a man might be on with a new love when he had left the third bridge behind him.

I liked not this fashion of speech, and when he saw that I was ill-pleased and grieved, instead of falling in with his merry mood, he took up a more earnest vein and said: "Never mind, Margery. Only one tall tree of love grows in my breast, and the name of it is Ann; the little flowers that may have come up round it when I was far away have but a short and starved life, and in no case can they do the great tree a mischief."

Then with all my heart I besought him that, as he

had now bound up the life and happiness of the sweetest and most loving maid on earth with his own, he would ever keep his faith and be to her a true man. Seeing, however, that he was but little moved by this counsel, the hot blood of the Schoppers mounted to my head and thereupon I railed at his sayings and doings as sinful and cruel, and he likewise flared out and bid me beware how I spoke ill of my own father; for that like as he, Herdegen, had carried the image of Ann in his heart, so had father carried that of our dear mother beyond the Alps, and nevertheless at Padua he had played the lute under the balcony of many a black-eyed dame, and won the name of "the Singer" there. A living fire, quoth he, waxed not the colder because more than one warmed herself thereat; all the matter was only to keep the place of honor for the right owner, and of that Ann was ever certain.

Sir Franz was witness to these words, and when presently Herdegen had quitted the room, he strove to appease and to comfort me, saying that his greatly gifted friend, who was full of every great and good quality, had but this one weakness: namely, that he could not make a manful stand against the temptations that came of his beauty and his gifts. He, Franz himself was of different mould.

And he went on to confess that he loved me, and that, if I would but consent to be his, he would ever cherish and serve me, with more humility and faithfulness even than his well-beloved Lord and King, who had dubbed him knight while he was yet so young.

And his speech sounded so warm and true, so full of deep and tender desires, that at any other time I might have yielded. But at that hour I was minded to trust no man; for, if Herdegen's love were not the truth, whereas it had grown up with him and was given to one above me in so many ways, what man's mind could I dare to build on? Yea, and I was too full of care for the happiness of my brother and of my friend to be ready to think of my own; so I could only speak him fair, but say him nay. Hardly had I said the words when a strange change came over him; his calm, sad face suddenly put on a furious aspect, and in his eyes, which hitherto had ever been gentle, there was a fire which affrighted me. Nay and even his voice, as he spoke, had a sharp ring in it, as though the bells had cracked which erewhile had tolled so sweet a peal. And all he had to say was a furious charge against me who had, said he, led him on by eye and speech, only to play a cruel trick upon him, with words of dreadful purpose against the silent knave who had come between him and me to defraud him; and by this he meant the Swabian, Junker von Kalenbach.

I was about to upbraid him for his rude and discourteous manners when we heard, outside, a loud outcry, and Ann ran in to fetch me. All in the Lodge who had legs came running together; all the hounds barked and howled as though the Wild Huntsman were riding by, and mingling therewith lo! a strange, outlandish piping and drumming.

A bear-leader, such as I had before now seen at the

town-fair, had made his way to the Lodge, and the swarthy master, with his two companions, as it might be his brothers, were like all the men of their tribe. A thick growth of hair covered the mouth below an eagle-nose, and on their shaggy heads they wore soft red bonnets. One was followed by a tall camel, slowly marching along with an ape perched on his hump; the other led a brown bear with a muzzle on his snout.

The master's wife, and a dark-faced young wench, were walking by the side of a little wagon having two wheels, to which an over-worked mule was harnessed. A youth, of may-be twelve years of age, blew upon a pipe for the bear to dance, and inasmuch as he had no clothes but a ragged little coat, and a sharp east wind was blowing, he quaked with cold and shivered as he piped. Notwithstanding he was a fine lad, well-grown, and with a countenance of outlandish but well nigh perfect beauty. He had come, for certain, from some distant land; yet was he not of the same race as the others.

When we had seen enough of the show, my uncle commanded that meat should be brought for the wanderers; and when pease-pottage and other messes had been given them, they fetched, from under the wagon-tilt, a swarthy babe, which, meseemed was a sweet little maid albeit she was so dark-colored.

Ann and I gazed at these folks while they ate, and it seemed strange to us to see that the well-favored lad put away from him with horror the bacon which the

old bear-leader set before him; and for this the man dealt him a rude blow.

After their meal the master went on his way; and when we likewise had eaten our dinner, my dear godfather and uncle, Christian Pfinzing, came from the town, bringing a troop of mercenaries to the camp where they were to be trained that they might fight against the Hussites. He, like the other guests, made friends with the strangers, and in his merry fashion he bid the older bear leader tell our fortunes by our hands, while the young ones should dance.

The man then read the future for each of us; my fortune was sheer folly, whereof no single word ever came true. He promised my brother a Count's coronet and a wife from a race of princes; and when Ann heard it, and held up her finger at Herdegen for shame, he whispered in her ear that she was of the race of the Sovereign Queen of all queens — of Venus, ruler of the universe. All this she heard gladly; yet could no one persuade her to let her hand be read.

At last it was the woman's turn to dance; before she began she had smoothed her hair and tied it with small gold pieces; and indeed she was a well grown maid and slender, well-favored in face and shape, with a right devilish flame in her black eyes. It was a strange but truly a pleasing thing to see her; first she laid a dozen of eggs in a circle on the grass, and then she beat her tambourine to the piping of the lad and the drumming of one of the men who had remained with her, and rattled it over her head with

wanton lightness till the bells in the hoop rang out, while she turned and bent her supple body in a mad, swift whirl, bowing and rising again. Her falcon eyes never gazed at the ground, but were ever fixed upwards or on the bystanders, and nevertheless her slender bare feet never went nigh the eggs in the wildest spinning of her dance.

The gentlemen, and we likewise, clapped our hands; then, while she stayed to take breath, she snatched Herdegen's hat from his head — and she had long had her eye on him — and gathered all the eggs into it with much bowing and bending to the measure of the music. When she had put all the eggs into the hat she offered it to my brother kneeling on one knee, and she touched the rim of her tambourine with her lips. The froward fellow put his fingers to his lips, as the little children do to blow a kiss, and when his eyes fell on that wench's, meseemed that this was not the first time they had met.

It was now a warm and windless autumn day, and after dinner my aunt was carried out into the courtyard. When the dancing was at an end, she, as was her wont, questioned the men and the elder woman as to all she desired to know; and, learning from them that the men were likewise tinkers, she bid Ann hie to the kitchen and command that the house-keeper should bring together all broken pots and pans. But now, near by the wagon, was a noise heard of furious barking, and the pitiful cry of a child.

The Junker, who had set forth early in the day to

scour the woods, had but now come home; the hounds with him had scented strangers, and had rushed on the brown babe, which was playing in the sand behind the wagon, making cakes and pasties. The dogs were indeed called off in all haste, but one of them, a spiteful badger-hound, had bitten deep into the little one's shoulder.

I ran forthwith to the spot, and picked up the babe in my arms, seeing its red blood flow; but the elder woman rushed at me, beside her wits with rage, to snatch it from me; and whereas she was doubtless its mother or grand-dame, I might have yielded up the child, but that Ritter Franz came to me in haste to bid me, from my Aunt Jacoba, carry it to her.

Who better than she knew the whole art and secret of healing the wounds of a hound's making? And so I told the old dame, to comfort her, albeit she struggled furiously to get the babe from me. Nay and she might have done so if the little thing had not clung round my neck with its right arm that had no hurt, as lovingly as though it had been mine own and no kin to the shrieking old woman.

But ere long a clear and strange light was cast on the matter; for when we had loosened the child's little shirt, and my aunt had duly washed the blood from the wounds, under the dark hue of its skin behold it was tender white, and so it was plain that here was a stolen child, needing to be rescued.

Then the house-stewardess, the widow of a forester whose husband had been slain by poachers, and who

labored bravely to bring up her five orphan children, with my aunt's help — this woman, I say, now remembered that when she had made her pilgrimage, but lately, to Vierzehnheiligen, the Knight von Hirschhorn, treasurer to the Lord Bishop of Bamberg at Schesslitz, not far from the place of pilgrimage, had lost a babe, stolen away by vagabond knaves. Then Aunt Jacoba bethought herself that restitution and benevolence might be made one; and, quoth she, this matter might greatly profit the housekeeper and her little ones, inasmuch as that the sorrowing father had promised a ransom of thirty Hungarian ducats to him who should bring back his little daughter living; and forthwith the whole tribe of the bear-leaders were to be bound. The old beldame gave our men a hard job, for she tried to make off to the forest, and called aloud: "Hind — Hind!" which was the young wench's name, with outlandish words which doubtless were to warn her to flee; but the serving men gained their end and made the wild hag fast.

Ann was pale and in pain with her head aching, but she helped my aunt to tend the child; and I was glad, inasmuch as I conceived that I knew where to find Herdegen and the young dancing wench, and I cared only to save his poor betrayed sweetheart from shame and sorrow. I crept away, unmarked, through the garden of herbs behind the lodge, to a moss hut which my banished cousin had built up for me, in a covert spot between two mighty beech-trees, while I was yet but a school maid.

Verily my imagination was not belied, for whereas I passed round the pine-grove I heard my brother cry out: "Ah — wild cat!" and the hussy's loathsome laugh. And thereupon they both came forth, only in the doorway he held her back to kiss her. At this she showed her white teeth, and meseemed she would fain bite him; she thrust him away and laughed as she said: "To-night; not too much at once." Howbeit he snatched her to him, and thereupon I called him by name and went forward.

He let her go soon enough then, but he stamped with his foot for sheer rage. This, indeed, moved me not; with a calm demeanor I bid the wench follow me, and to that faithless knave I cried: "Fie!" in a tone of scorn which must have made his ears burn a good while. Before we entered the garden I bid him go round about the house and come upon the others from the right hand; she was to come with me and round by the left side.

I now saw that there were shreds of moss and dry leaves in the young woman's hair and bid her brush them out. This she did with a mocking smile, and said in scorn "Your lover?"

"Nay," said I, "far from it. But yet one whom I would fain shield from evil." She shrugged her shoulders; I only said: "Come on."

As we went round to the front of the house the elder woman was being led away with her hands bound, and no sooner did the young one descry her than she picked up her skirts and with one wild rush

tried to be off and away. I called Spond, my trusty guard, and bid him stay her; and the noble hound dogged her steps till the men could catch her and lead her to my aunt. The lady questioned her closely, deeming that so young and comely a creature might be less stubborn that the old hag who had grown grey in sins; but Hind stood dumb and made as though she knew not our language. As to Herdegen, he meanwhile had greeted Ann with great courtesy; nevertheless he had kept close to the dancing wench, and took upon himself to tie her bonds and lead her to the dungeon cell. He sped well, inasmuch as he got away with her alone, as he desired; for Sir Franz delayed me again, and such a suit as he now pleaded can but seldom have found a match, for I was bent only on following my brother, to rescue him from the vagabond woman's snares; and while the knight held me fast by the hand, and swore he loved me, I was only striving to be free, and gazing after Herdegen and Hind, heeding him not. At length he hurt my hand, which I could not get away from him; and whereas he was beginning to look wildly and to seem crazed, I besought him to leave me free henceforth and try his fortune elsewhere. But still he would never have set me free so hastily if an evil star had not brought the Swabian Junker to the spot.

Sir Franz, without a word of greeting or warning, went up to him and upbraided him for having caused a mischief to a helpless babe through his heedless conduct. But if Sir Franz knew not already that he, to

whom he spoke as roughly as though he were a froward serving man, was in truth son and heir of a right noble house, he learnt it now. His last words were: "And for the future have your savage hounds in better governance!" Whereupon the other coolly answered: "And you, your tongue."

On this the other shrugged his shoulders and replied in scorn that to be sure his tongue was for use and not for silence like some folks'. And I marvelled where the Swabian, who was so slow of speech, found the words for retort and answer, till at length it was too much for him and he laid his hand on his hanger as a second and a sharper tongue.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE dancing-wench was locked into the cell with the rest of the wanderers, and as I looked in through the window at the fine young creature, squatting in a corner, I had pity on her, and for my part I would fain have sent her forth and away never to see her more.

I could nowhere find Herdegen; I had no mind for Uncle Christian's jests; and when, at last, I betook me to my own chamber, meseemed that some horrible doom was in the air, from which there was no escape. And matters were no better when Ann, who of late had been free from her bad headache, came up to bed, to hide her increasing pain among the pillows. So I sat dumb and thoughtful by her side, till Aunt Jacoba sent for me to lay cold water on the arm of the little kidnapped maid. The child had been well washed, and lay clean and fresh between the sheets, and the swarthy dirty little changeling was now a sweet, fair-haired darling. I tended it gladly; all the more when I thought of the joy it would bring to its father and mother; notwithstanding the evil nightmare would not be cast off, not even when the clatter of wine cups and Uncle Christian's big laugh fell on my ear.

Seldom had I so keenly missed Herdegen's mirthful voice. The housekeeper told me that he had gone

on horseback into the town at about the hour of *Ave Maria.* My grand-uncle had bidden him to go to him.

The vagabond knaves had already been put to the torture in my brother's presence, but they had confessed nothing of their guilt; inasmuch, indeed, as in our dungeon there were none other instruments of torture than the rack, the thumbscrew, and scourges needful for the Bamberg torture, and a Pomeranian cap, made to crush the head somewhat; but in Nuremberg there was a store, less mild and of more active effect.

The air was hot and heavy, the sun had set behind black clouds, yellow and dim, like a blind eye. A strange languor came over me, though I was wont to be so brisk, and with it a long train of dismal and hideous images. First I saw the Junker and Sir Franz, who had fallen out about me, a foolish maid; then it was my Ann, pining with grief, paler than ever with a nun's veil on her; or standing by the Pegnitz, on the very spot where, erewhile, in the sweet Springtide, a forsaken maid had cast herself in.

The first lightning rent the sky and the storm came up in haste, bursting above our heads, and as the thunder roared closer and closer after the flash I was more and more frightened. Moreover the sick child wept piteously and waxed restless with fever and pain.

By this time all was still in the dining-hall; but when my aunt bid me let the housekeeper take my place by the little one's bed and go to my rest, I would not; for indeed I could in no wise have slept.

They let me have my way, and soon after mid-

night, seized with fresh dread anent Herdegen, I was at the open window to let the rough wind fan my hot head, when suddenly the hounds set up a furious barking, as though the Forest lodge were beset on all sides by robbers. And at the same time I saw, by the glare of the lightning, that the old lime-tree in the midst of my aunt's herb garden was lying on the earth. This cut me to the heart, inasmuch as this tree was dear to my uncle, having been planted by his grandfather; and there was never a spot where his ailing wife was so fain to lie in the hot summer days as under its shadow. Aye, and all my young life's happiness, meseemed, was like that tree — torn up by the roots, and I gazed spellbound at the blasted lime-tree till I was affrighted by a new horror; on the furthest rim of the sky, on the side where the town lay, I beheld a line of light whieh waxed broader and brighter till it was rose and blood-red.

A wild uproar came up from the kennels and foresters' huts, and I heard a medley of many voices; and whereas the distant flare began to soar more brightly heavenward I believed those who were saying below that all Nuremberg was in flames.

Even Aunt Jacoba had quitted her bed, and every soul under that roof looked forth at the fire and gave an opinion as to whether it were waxing or waning. And, thanks be to the Blessed Virgin, the latter were in the right; some few granaries, or stores of goods it might be, had been burnt out, and I, among other fainting hearts, was beginning to breathe more easily,

when the watchman's cry was heard once more and what next befell showed that my fears had not been groundless.

It was the vigil of Saint Simon and Saint Jude's day* in the year of our Lord 1420, and never shall I forget it. The great things which befell that night are they not written in the Chronicles of the town, and still fresh in many minds? but peradventure in none are they more deeply printed than in mine; and while I move my pen I can, as it were, see the great hall of the hunting lodge with my very eyes. Many folks are astir, and all in scant attire and full of eager thirst for tidings. The alarm of fire has brought them from their pillows in all haste, and they press close and gaze through the door, which stands wide open, at the light spot in the sky. Not one dares go forth in the wild wind, and many a one draws his garment or cloak or coverlet closer round him; the gale sweeps in with such fury that the pitch torches against the wall are well nigh blown out, and the red and yellow glare casts a weird light in the hall.

Then the watchman's call is silent, and the growling and wailing of the forest folk comes nigher and nigher.

Presently a man totters across the threshold, upheld with sore difficulty by the gate-keeper Endres** inasmuch as his own knees quake; and he who comes home thus, as he might be drunken or grievously hurt, is none other than my brother Herdegen. The torch-

* October 28th. ** Andrew.

light falls on his face, and whereas my eyes descry him I cry aloud, and my soul has no thought of him but sheer pity and true love.

I haste to take Endres' place while Eppelein,* his faithful serving-man, whom he had not taken with him as is his wont, holds him up on the other hand.

But touch him where we may he feels a hurt; and while Uncle Conrad and the rest press him with questions, he can only point to his head and lips, which are too weak for thinking or speaking.

Alas! that poor fellow, meseems, bears but little likeness to my noble Herdegen, on whose arm the Italian Marchesa riveted her golden fetter. His face is swollen and bloodshot in one part, and cruelly torn in others. Where are the lovelocks that graced him so well? His left arm is helpless, his rich attire hangs about him in rags. He might be a battered, wretched beggar picked up in the high-road, and I rejoice truly to think that Ann is within the shelter of her bed and escapes the sight.

My aunt, who had long ere this been carried down to the hall, felt all his limbs and joints, and found that no bones were broken, while my uncle questioned him; and he told us in broken words that his horse had taken fright in the forest at a flash of lightning, had thrown him, and then dragged him through the brushwood; it was his man's nag which, as it fell, he had taken out that evening, and it was roaming now about the woods.

* Appolonius.

He had scarce ended his tale, when one of the warders of the dungeon and the gate-keeper rushed in with the tidings that one of the prisoners, and that the young wench, had escaped, although the door of the keep was locked and the window barred. She was clearly a witch, and only one thing was possible; namely that she had flown through the barred window, after the manner of witches on a broomstick, or in the shape of a bird, a bat, or an owl; nay, this was as good as certain, inasmuch as that the watchman had seen a wraith in the woods at about the hour of midnight, and the same face had appeared to the kennel-keeper. Both swore they had crossed themselves thereat, and said many paternosters. The other captives bore witness to the same, declaring that the wench had never been one of them, but had joined herself unawares to their company last midsummer eve, without saying whence, or whither she would go. She had flown off some hours since in the form of a monstrous vampire, but had fallen upon them first with tooth and nail; and albeit they were an evil-disposed crew their tale seemed truthful, whereas they were covered with many scratches which were not caused by the torture.

At these tidings my brother lost all heart, and fell back in the arm-chair as pale as ashes. I was presently left alone with him; but he answered nothing to my questions, and meseemed he slept. As day dawned I was chilled with the cold, so, inasmuch I could do nothing to help him, I went down stairs. There I found our gentlemen taking leave, for one was off to

the city to make inquisition as to the fire, and the other would fain seek his warm bed.

Hot elecampane wine had been served to give them comfort, when again we heard horses' hoofs and the watchman's call. Everybody came out in haste, only Uncle Christian Pfinzing did not move, for, so long as the wine jug was not empty, it would have needed more than this to stir him. He was a mighty fat man, with a short brick-red neck, cropped grey hair, and a round, well-favored countenance, with shrewd little eyes which stood out from his head.

We young Schoppers loved this jolly, warm-hearted uncle, who was childless, with all our hearts; but I clung to him most of all, since he was my dear godfather; likewise had he for many years shown an especial and truly fatherly care for Ann.

Well, Uncle Christian had peacefully gone on drinking the fiery liquor, waiting for the others; but when they came to tell him what tidings the horseman had brought, the cup fell from his hand, clattering down on the paved floor and spilling the wine; and at the same time his kind, faithful head dropped to one side, and for a few minutes his senses had left him. Albeit we were able ere long to bring him back to life again, I found, to my great distress, that his tongue seemed to have waxed heavy. Howbeit, by the help of the Blessed Virgin, he afterwards was so far recovered that when he sat over his cups his loud voice and deep laugh could be heard ringing through the room.

The tidings delivered by the messenger and which brought on this sickness — of which the leech Ulsenius had ere this warned him — might have shaken the heart of a sterner man; for my Uncle Christian lodged in the Imperial Fort as its warder, and his duty it was to guard it. Near it, likewise, on the same hill-crag, stood the old castle belonging to the High Constable, or Burgrave Friedrich. Now the Burgrave had come to high words with Duke Ludwig the Bearded, of Bayern-Ingolstadt, so that the Duke's High Steward, the noble Christoph von Laymingen, who dwelt at Lauf, had made so bold, with his lord at his back, as to break the peace with Friedrich, although he had lately become a powerful prince as Elector of the Mark of Brandenburg.

The said Christoph von Laymingen, so the horsemen told us, had ridden forth to Nuremberg this dark night and had seized the castle — not indeed the Imperial castle, which stood unharmed, but the stronghold of the old Zollern family which had stood by its side — and had burnt it to the ground. This, indeed, was no mighty offence in the eyes of the town-council, inasmuch as it bore no great friendship to his Lordship the Constable and Elector, and had had many quarrels with him — nay, long after this the council was able to gain possession of the land and ruins by purchase — still, uncle Christian bitterly rued having sent his men-at-arms, whose duty it was to defend the castle, out into the country, though it were for so good a purpose as fighting against the Hussites.

It might have brought him into bad favor with the Elector; however, it did him no further mischief. One thing was certainly proven beyond doubt: that knavish treason had been at work in this matter; at Nuremberg, under the torture, it came out that the bear-master had been a spy and tell-tale bribed by Laymingen to discover whither Pfinzing and his men had removed.

And lest any one should conceive that here was an end to the woes that had fallen on the forest lodge in that short time from midnight to daybreak, I must record one more; for the new day, which dawned with no hue of rose, grey and dismal over the tawny woods, brought us fresh sorrow and evil.

Behind the moss-hut, wherein I had found my Herdegen with the dancing hussy, the Swabian Junker and Ritter Franz had fought, without any heed of the law and order of such combat — fought for life or death, and for my sake. And as though in this cruel time I were doomed to go through all that should worst wound my poor heart, I must need go forth to see the stricken lime-tree at that very moment when the Junker had dealt his enemy a deadly stroke and came rushing away with his hair all abroad like a mad man. It was indeed a merciful chance that my Uncle Conrad and the chaplain likewise had come forth to the garden, so that I might go with them to see the wounded knight.

The youth was lying on the wet grass, now much paler than ever, and his lips trembling with pain. A faded leaf had fallen on his brow and was strange to

behold against his ashen skin; but I bent me down and took it off. By him was lying the uprooted lime-tree, from which that leaf had fallen, and whereas the rain was dropping from it fast, meseemed it was weeping.

And my heart was knit as it never had been before, to this young knight who had shed his blood in my behalf; but while I gazed down right lovingly into his face the Swabian came close up to him with ruthful eyes, and from those of the wounded man there shot at me a glance so full of hate and malice that I shuddered before it. This was an end, then, to all pity and tenderness. And yet, as I looked on his cold, set face, as pale and white as dull chalk, I could not forbear tears; for it is ever pitiful to see when death overtakes one who is not ripe for dying, as we bewail the green corn which is smitten by the hail, and hold festival when the reaper cuts the golden ears.

Thus were there three sick and wounded in the forest-lodge, besides my aunt; for Uncle Christian must have some few days of rest and nursing. Howbeit there was no lack of us to tend them; Ann was recovered to-day and Cousin Maud had come in all haste so soon as she knew of what had befallen Herdegen; for, of us all, he held the largest room in her heart; and even when he was at school, albeit he had money and to spare of his own, she had given him so freely of hers that he was no whit behind the sons of wealthy Counts.

Biding the time till my cousin should come — and

she could not until the evening — it was my part to stay with my brother; but whereas Ann would fain have helped me, this Aunt Jacoba conceived to be in no way fitting for a young maid; much less then would she grant my earnest desire that I might devote me to the care of Sir Franz; though she had it less in mind to consider its fitness, than to conceive that it would be of small benefit to the wounded man, at the height of his fever, to know that the maid for whose love he had vainly sued was at his side.

Thus I was forbidden to see Ann in my brother's chamber; nevertheless I had much on my heart and I could guess that she likewise was eager to speak with me; but when at last I was alone with her in our bed chamber, she had matter for speech of which I had not dreamed. When I asked her what message she might desire me to give Herdegen from her, she besought me as I loved her not to name her at all in his presence. This, indeed, amazed me not a little, inasmuch as I weened not that she knew of all the grief I had suffered yestereve. But this was not so; I learnt now that she had marked everything, and had heard the men's light talk about the dashing youth whom the dark-eyed hussy had been so swift to choose from among them all. I, indeed, tried to make the best of the matter, but she gave me to understand that, if her lover had not done himself a mischief, it had been her intent to question him that very day as to whether he was in earnest with his love-pledges, or would rather that she should give him back his ring and his word. All this

she spoke without a tear or a sigh, with steadfast purpose; and already I began, for my part, to doubt of the truth of her love; and I told her this plainly. Thereupon she clasped me to her, and while the tears gathered and sparkled in her great eyes, expounded to me all the matter; and in truth it was all I should myself have said in her place. She, of simple birth, would enter the circle of her betters on sufferance, and her new friends would, of a certainty, not do her more honor than her own husband. On his manner of treating her therefore would depend what measure of respect she might look for as his wife. And so long as their promise to marry was a secret, she would have him show, whether to her alone or before all the world, that he held her consent as of no less worth than that of the wealthiest and highest born heiress.

All this she spoke in hot haste while her cheeks glowed red. I saw the blue veins swell on her pure brow, and can never forget the image of her as she raised her tearful eyes to Heaven and pressing her hands on her panting bosom cried: "To go forth with him to want or death is as nothing! But never will I be led into shame, not even by him."

When presently I left her, after speaking many loving words to her, and holding her long in my arms, she was ready to forgive him; but she held to this: Not a word, not a glance, not a kiss, until Herdegen had vowed that yesterday's offence should be the first and last she should ever suffer."

How clearly she had apprehended the matter!

Albeit she little knew how deeply her beloved had sinned against the truth he owed her. They say that Love is blind, and so he may be at first; but when once his trust is shaken the bandage falls, and the purblind boy is turned into a many-eyed, sharp-sighted Argus.

CHAPTER IX.

EVERY one was ready to nurse the little maid who called herself "little Katie." But as to Herdegen, I was compelled for the time to say nothing to him of what Ann required of him, for he lay sick of a fever. He was faithfully tended by Eppelein, the son of a good servant of our father's who had lost his life in waiting on his master when stricken with the plague. Eppelein had indeed grown up in our household, among the horses; even as a lad he had by turns helped Herdegen in his sports, and rendered him good service, and had ever shown him a warmer love than that of a hireling.

It fell out one day that my brother's best horse came to harm by this youth's fault, and when Herdegen, for many days, would vouchsafe no word to him the lad took it so bitterly to heart that he stole away from the house, and whereas no one could find him, we feared for a long time that he had done himself a mischief. Nevertheless he was alive and of good heart. He had passed the months in a various life; first as a crier to a wandering quack, and afterwards, inasmuch as he was a nimble and likely lad, he had waited on the guests at one of the best frequented inns

at Würzberg. It came then to pass that his eminence Cardinal Branda, Nuncio from his Holiness the Pope, took up his quarters there, and he carried the lad away with him as his body-servant to Italy, and treated him well till the restless wight suddenly fell into a languor of home-sickness, and ran away from this good master, as erewhile he had run away from our house. Perchance some love-matter drove him to fly. Certain it is that in his wandering among strangers he had come to be a mighty handy, wide-awake fellow, with much that was good in him, inasmuch as with all his subtlety he had kept his true Nuremberger's heart.

When he had journeyed safely home again he one day stole unmarked into our courtyard, where his old mother lived in an out-building on the charity of the Schoppers; he went up to her and stood before her, albeit she knew him not, and laid the gold pieces he had saved one by one on the work-table before her. The little old woman scarce knew where she was for sheer amazement, nor wist she who he was till he broke out into his old loud laugh at the sight of her dismay. Verily, as she afterwards said, that laugh brought more gladness to her heart and had rung sweeter in her ears than the gold pieces.

Then Susan had called us down to the courtyard, and when a smart young stripling came forth to meet us, clad in half Italian and half German guise, none knew who he might be till he looked Herdegen straight in the face, and my brother cried out: "It is our Eppelein!" Then the tears flowed fast down his cheeks,

but Herdegen clasped him to him and kissed him right heartily on both cheeks.

All this did I bring to mind as I saw this said Eppelein carefully and sorrowfully laying a wet cloth, at my aunt's bidding, on his master's head where it was so sorely cut; and methought how well it would have been if Herdegen were still so ready to follow the prompting of his heart.

Understanding anon that I was not needed by this bed, where Eppelein kept faithful watch and ward, and that Sir Franz's chamber was closed to me, I went down stairs again, for I had heard a rumor that the swarthy lad — who had yesterday played on the pipe — was to be put to the torture. This I would fain have hindered, whereas by many tokens I was certain that the said comely youth was not one of the vagabond crew, but, like little Katie, might well be a child knavishly kidnapped from some noble house. Whereas I reached the hall, Balzer, the keeper, was about bringing the lad in. Outside indeed it was dim and wet, but within it was no less comfortable, for a mighty fire was blazing in the wide chimney-place. My aunt was warming her thereat, and Ann likewise was of the company, with Uncle Conrad, Jost Tetzel, my godfather Christian Pfinzing, and the several guests.

I joined myself to them and in an under tone told them what I had noted, saying that, more by token the youth must have a good conscience; for, whereas he had not been cast into the cell but had been locked into a stable to take charge of the camels and the ape,

he had nevertheless not tried to escape, although it would have been easy.

To this opinion some inclined; and seeing that the boy spoke but a few words of German, but knew more of Italian, I addressed him in that tongue; and then it came to light that he was verily and indeed a stolen child. The vagabonds had bartered for him in Italy, giving a fair girl whom they had with them in exchange; likewise he said he was of princely birth, but had fallen into slavery some two years since, when a fine galley governed by his father, an Emir or prince of Egypt, had fought with another coming from Genoa in Italy.

When I had presently interpreted these words to the others, Jost Tetzel, Ursula's father, declared them to be sheer lies and knavery; even Uncle Conrad deemed them of little worth; and for this reason: that if the lad had indeed been the son of some grand Emir of Egypt the bear-leader would for certain have made profit of him by requiring his ransom.

But when I told the lad of this he fixed his great eyes very modestly on me, and in truth there was no small dignity in his mien and voice as he asked me:

"Could I then bring poverty on my parents, who were ever good to me, to bestow wealth on that evil brood? Never should those knavish rogues have learnt from me what I have gladly revealed to thee who are full of goodness and beauty!"

This speech went to my heart; and if it were not truth then is there no truth in all the world! But

when again I had interpreted his words, and Tetzel still would but shrug his shoulders, this vexed me so greatly that it was as much as I could do to refrain myself, and hold my peace.

I had seen from the first, in Uncle Christian's eyes, that he was of the same mind with me; yet could I not guess what purpose he had in his head, although to judge by her face it was something passing strange, when he muttered some behest to Ann with his poor fettered tongue. Then, when she told me what my godfather required of me, I was not in any haste to obey, for, indeed, maidenly bashfulness and pity hindered me. Yet, whereas the brave old man nodded to spur me on, with his heavy head, still covered with a cold wet cloth, I called up all my daring, and before the lad was aware I dealt him a slap on the cheek.

It was not a hard blow, but the lad seemed as much amazed as though the earth had opened at his feet. His dark face turned ashen-grey and his great eyes looked at me in tearful enquiry, but so grievously that I already rued my unseemly deed.

Soon, however, I had cause to be glad; the youth's demeanor won his cause. Uncle Christian had only desired to prove him. He knew men well, and he knew that youths of various birth take a blow in the face in various ways; now, the Emir's son had demeaned him as one of his rank, and had stood the ordeal! So my aunt Jacoba told him, for she had at once seen through Uncle Christian's purpose, and presently Jost Tetzel himself, though ill-pleased and

sullen, confessed his error. Then, when they had promised the youth that he should be spared all further ill-usage, he opened the lining of his garment and showed us a gem which his mother had privily hung about his neck, and which was a lump or tablet of precious sky-blue turkis-stone, as large as a great plum, whereon was some charm inscribed in strange, outlandish signs which the Jewish Rabbi Hillel, when he saw it, declared to be Arabic letters.

The bear-leader had called the lad Beppo; but his real name was a long one and hard to utter, out of which my forest uncle picked up two syllables for a name he could speak with ease, calling him Akusch.

With Cousin Maud's assent the black youth was attached to my service as Squire, inasmuch as it was I who at first had "dubbed him knight;" and when I gave him to understand this he could not contain himself for joy, and from that hour he ever proved my most ready servant, ever alert and thankful; and the little benevolence it was in my power to shew the poor lad bore fruit more than a thousand fold in after times, to me and mine.

After noon that same day Ann confessed to me that she had it in her mind to quit the lodge that very evening, journeying home with Master Ulsenius; and when she withstood all my entreaties she told Cousin Maud likewise that she had indeed already left her own kin too long without her succor.

Aunt Jacoba was in her chimney corner, and how

she took this sudden purpose on Ann's part, may be imagined.

It was so gloomy a day that there was scarce a change when dusk fell. Grey wreaths of cloud hung over the tree-tops, and fine rain dripped with a soft, steady patter, as though it would never cease; nor was there another sound, inasmuch as neither horn, nor watchman's cry, nor bell might break the silence, for the sake of the wounded men; nay, even the hounds, meseemed, understood that the daily course of life was out of gear.

Ann had gone to pack her little baggage with Susan's help, but she had bid me remain with the child. It was going on finely; it would play with the doll my Aunt had given it in happy pastime, and now I did the little one's bidding and was right glad to be her play fellow for a while. Time slipped on as I sat there making merry with little Katie, doing the dolly's leather breeches and jerkin off and on, blowing on the child's little shoulder when it smarted or giving her a sweetmeat to comfort her, and still Ann came not, albeit she had promised to join me so soon as her baggage was ready.

Hereupon a sudden fear seized me, and as soon as the housekeeper came up I went to seek Ann in our chamber. There stood all her chattel, so neat as only she could make them; and I learnt from Susan that Ann had gone down, some time since, into Aunt Jacoba's chamber.

I was minded to seek her there, and went by the

ante-chamber where the sick lady's writing-table and books stood, and which led to the sitting chamber. I trod lightly by reason that the knight's chamber was beneath; thus no one heard me; but I could see beyond the dark ante-chamber into the further one, where wax lights were burning in a double candlestick, and lo! Ann was on her knees by the sick lady's couch, like to the linden-tree which the storm had overthrown yesternight; and she hid her face in my aunt's lap and sobbed so violently that her slender body shook as though in a fever. And Aunt Jacoba had laid her two hands on Ann's head, as it were in blessing. And I saw first one large tear, and then many more, run down the face of this very woman who had cast out her own fair son. Often had I marked on her little finger a certain ring in which a little white thing was set; yet was this no splinter of the bone of a Saint, but the first tooth her banished son had shed. And, when she deemed that no man saw her, she would press her hand to her lips and kiss the little tooth with fervent love. And now, whereas love had waked up again in her heart, that son had his part and share in it; for albeit none dared make mention of him in her presence she ever loved him as the apple of her eye.

I was no listener, yet could I not shut mine ears; I heard how the frail old lady exhorted the love-sick maid, and bid her trust in God, and in Herdegen's faithfulness. Also I heard her speak well indeed of my brother's spirit and will as noble and upright; and she promised Ann to uphold her to the best of her power.

She bid her favorite farewell with a fond kiss, and many comforting words; and as she did so I minded me of a wondrously fair maiden, the daughter of Pernhart the coppersmith, known to young and old in the town as fair Gertrude, who, each time I had beheld her of late, meseemed had grown even sadder and paler, and whom I now knew that I should never see more, inasmuch as that only yestereve Uncle Christian had told us, with tears in his eyes, that this sweet maid had died of pining, and had been buried only a day or two since with much pomp. Now my aunt had heard these tidings, and she had shaken her head in silence and folded her hands, as it were in prayer, fixing her eyes on the ground.

Cousin Götz and Herdegen — fair Gertrude and my Ann; what made them so unlike that my aunt should bring herself to mete their bonds of love with so various a measure?

I quitted the room when Ann came forth, and outside the door I clasped her in my arms; and in the last hour we spent together at the forest lodge she bid me greet her heart's beloved from her, and gave me for him the last October rose-bud, which my uncle had plucked for her at parting. Yet she held to her demands.

She left us after supper, escorted by Master Ulsenius. She had come hither one sunny morn with the song of the larks, and now she departed in darkness and gloom.

CHAPTER X.

"By Saint Bacchus — if there be such a saint in the calendar, there is stuff in the lad, my boy!" cried burly Uncle Christian Pfinzing, and he thumped the table with his fists so that all the vessels rang. His tongue was still somewhat heavy, but he had mended much in the three weeks since Ann had departed, and it was hard enough by this time to get him away from the wine-jug.

It was in the refectory of the forest lodge that he had thus delivered himself to my Uncle Conrad and Jost Tetzel, Ursula's father; and it was of my brother Herdegen that he spoke.

Herdegen was healed of his bruises and his light limbs had never been more nimble than now; still he bore his left arm in a sling, for there it was, said he, that the horse's hoof had hit him. Whither the horse had fled none had ever heard; nor did any man enquire, inasmuch as it was only Eppelein's nag, and my granduncle had given him a better one.

My silly brain, from the first, had been puzzled to think wherefor my brother should have taken that nag to ride to see his guardian, who thought more than other men of a good horse. And in truth I was not

far from guessing rightly, so I will forthwith set down whither indeed my dear brother's horse had vanished, and by what chance and hap he had fallen into so evil a plight.

He had aforetime met the young wench on his way from Padua to Nuremberg, not far from Dachau and had then and there begun his tricks with her, giving her to wit that she might find him again at the forest lodge in the Lorenzer wald. Now when matters took so ill a turn, he pledged himself to get her safe away from the dungeon cell. To this end he feigned that he would ride into the town, after possessing himself of the key of the black hole and after stowing a suit of his man's apparel and a loaf of bread into his saddle-poke. Then he wandered about the wood for some time, and as soon as it fell dark he stole back to the house again on foot. He had made a bold and well-devised plan, and yet he might have come to a foul end; for, albeit the hounds, who knew him well, let him pass into the cell, within he was so fiercely set upon that it needed all his strength and swiftness to withstand it. The froward wretches had plotted to fall upon him and to escape with the wench from their prison, even if it were over his dead body.

One of the bear-leaders had made shift to strip the cords from his hands, and when my brother entered into the dark place where the prisoners lay, they flew at him to fell him. But even on the threshold Herdegen saw through their purpose, and had no sooner shut the door than he drew his hunting knife. Then the

old beldame gripped him by the throat and clawed him tooth and nail; one of the ruffians beat him with a stave torn from the bedstead till he weened he had broken or bruised all his limbs, while the other, whose hands were yet bound, pressed between him and the door. In truth he would have come to a bad end, but that the younger woman saved him at the risk of her own life. The man who had rid himself of his bonds had raised the heavy earthen pitcher to break Herdegen's head withal, when the brave wench clutched the wretch by the arm and hung on to him till Herdegen stuck him with his knife. Thus the ringleader fell, and my brother pulled up his deliverer and dragged her to the door. As he opened it the old woman and the other prisoner put forth their last strength to force their way out, but with his strong arm he thrust them back and locked the door upon them.

Thus he led the young woman, who had come off better than he had feared in the fray, forth to freedom, to keep his word to her.

Out in the wood, in spite of thunder and lightning, he made her to put on Eppelein's weed and mount the nag. Thereafter he led her horse to the brook, which floweth through the woods down to the meadow-land, and bid her ride along in the water so far as she might, to put the hounds off the scent. The bread in the saddle-bag would feed her for a few days, and now it lay with her to escape pursuit. And this good deed of my brother's had smitten the lost creature to the heart; when he was about to help her to mount he dropped

down on the wet ground from loss of blood, but as he opened his eyes again, behold, his head was resting on her lap and she kissed his brow. Despite her own peril she had not left him in such evil plight, but had done all she could to bring him to his senses; nay, she had gathered leaves by the glare of the lightning to staunch the blood which flowed freely from the worst of his wounds. Nor was she to be moved to go on her way till he showed her that in truth he could walk.

Thus it befel that I long after thought of her with kindness; and indeed, she was not wholly vile; and every human soul hath in it somewhat good which spurs forth to love, inasmuch as it is love which can cast light on all, and that full brightly; and what is bright is good; and that light dieth not till the last spark is dead.

As to Herdegen, verily I have never understood how he could find it in his heart to peril his life for the sake of keeping his word to a vagabond hussy while, at the same time, he was breaking troth with the fairest and sweetest maid on earth. Yet I count it to him chiefly for good that he could risk life and honor to hinder those who fell upon him so foully from escaping the arm of justice; and it is this upholding of the law which truly does more to lift men above us women-folk than any other thing.

Well, by that evening when Uncle Christian thus pledged my brother, Herdegen was quite himself again in mind and body. At first it had seemed as though a

wall had been raised up between us; but after that I had told him that I had concealed from Ann all that I had seen by ill-hap at the moss-hut, he was as kind and trusting as of old, and he showed himself more ready to give Ann the pledge she required than I had looked to find him, stiff-necked as he ever was. And he hearkened unmoved when I told him what Ann had said: "That she was ready to follow him to death, but not to shame."

"That," quoth he, "she need never fear from any true man, and with all his wildness he might yet call himself that." Then he stretched himself at full length on his chair, and threw his arms in the air, and cried: "Oh, Margery. If you could but slip for one half-hour into your mad brother's skin. In your own, which is so purely white, you can never, till the day of doom, understand what I am. If ever I have seemed weary it is but to keep up a mannerly appearance; verily I could break forth ten times a day and shoot skywards like a rocket for sheer joy in life. When that mood comes over me there is no holding me, and I should dare swear that the whole fair earth had been made and created for my sole and free use, with all that therein is — and above all other creatures the dear, sweet daughters of Eve! — and I can tell you, Margery, the women agree with me. I have only to open my arms and they flutter into them, and not to close them tight — that, Margery, is too much to look for; yet is there but one true bliss, and but one Ann, and the best of all joys is to clasp her to my heart and kiss

her lips. I will keep faith with her; I will have nought to say to the rest. But how shall I keep them away from me? Can I wish that those rascals had put my eyes out, had crippled my limbs, had thrashed me to a scare-crow, to the end that the maids should turn their backs on me? Nay, and even no rain-torrent could cool the hot blood of the Schoppers; no oak staff nor stone pitcher could kill the wild cravings within. There is nothing for it but to cast my body among thorns like Saint Francis. But what would even that profit me? You see yourself how well this skin heals of the worst wounds!"

Hereupon I earnestly admonished him of his devoir to that lady who was so truly his, and with whom he had exchanged rings. But he cried: "Do you believe that I did not tell myself, every hour of the day, that she was a thousand-fold more worth than all the rest put together? Never could I deem any maid so sweet as she has been ever since we were children together; nay, and if I lost her I should utterly perish, for it is from her that I, a half-ruined wretch, get all that yet is best in me!"

And many a time did I hear him utter the like; and when I saw his large blue eyes flash as he spoke, while he pushed the golden curls back from his brow, verily he was so goodly a youth to look upon that it was easy to view that the daughters of Eve might be ready to cast themselves into his arms.

This evening, as it fell, Aunt Jacoba was not with her guests, but unwillingly, inasmuch as we were to

depart homewards next morning, and the gentlemen sat late over their farewell cups. It had become Cousin Maud's care to hinder Uncle Christian from drinking more freely than he ought; but this evening he had made the task a hard one; nay, when she steadfastly forbade him a third cup he got it by craft and in spite of her, nor could she persuade him to forego the dangerous joy. When he had cried, as has been told, that "there was stuff" in my brother, it was by reason of his having perceived that Herdegen had already filled his cup for the fourteenth time, and when the youth had drunk it off the old man sang out in high glee:

"Der Eppela Gaila von Dramaus
Reit' allezeit zu vierzeht aus!" *

"Now, if the boy can drink three times the mystic seven, he will do what I could do at his age."

And presently Herdegen did indeed drink his one and twenty cups, and when at last he paced the whole length of the great dining hall on one seam of the flooring the old man was greatly pleased, and rewarded him with the gift of a noble tankard which he himself had won of yore at a drinking bout. All this made good sport for us, save only for Jost Tetzel, who was himself a right moderate man; indeed, in aftertimes,

* An old popular rhyme in Nuremberg. "Eppela (Apollonius) Gaila of Dramaus — or Drameyer — could always go as far as fourteen cups." Apollonius von Gailingen was a brigand chief who brought much damage and vexation on the town. Drameysel, in popular form Dramaus, was his stronghold near Muggendorf in Swiss Franconia.

when at Venice I saw how that wealthy and noble gentlemen drank but sparingly of the juice of the grape, I marvelled wherefor we Germans are ever proud of a man who is able to drink deep, and apt to look askance at such as fear to see the bottom of the cup. And if I had an answer ready, that likewise I owed to my uncle Christian; inasmuch as that very eve, when I would fain have warned Herdegen against the good liquor, my uncle put in his word and said it was every man's duty to follow in the ways of Saint George the dragon-killer, and to quell and kill every fiend; be it what it might. "Now in the wine cup, quoth he, there lurks a dragon named drunkenness, and it beseemeth German valor and strength not merely to vanquish it, but even to make it do good service: The fiend of the grape, like the serpent killed by the saint, has two wide pinions, and the true German drinker must make use of them to soar up to the seventh heaven."

And as concerns my Herdegen, I must confess that when he had well drunk his spirits were higher, his mind clearer, and his song more glad; and this is not so save in those dragon-slayers who have been blessed with a fine temper and a strong brain inherited from their parents.

Every evening had there been the like mirthful doings over their wine; but Sir Franz had been ever absent. He was even now forced to remain in his chamber, albeit Master Ulsenius had declared that his life was out of danger. The damage done to his lungs

he must to be sure carry to his grave, nor could he be able to follow us for some weeks yet. He was not to think of making the journey to his own home in Bohemia during this winter season, and at this farewell drinking bout we held council as to whose roof he might find lodging under. He, for his part, would soonest have found shelter with us; but Cousin Maud refused it, and with good reason, inasmuch as I had freely told her that never in this world would I hearken to his suit.

At last it seemed plain that it was Jost Tetzel's part to offer him a home in his great house; nor did he refuse, by reason that Sir Franz von Welemisl was a man of birth and wealth, and his Bohemian and Hungarian kin stood high at the Imperial court.

Next morning, as we drank the stirrup cup, my eyes filled with tears, and it was with a sad heart that I bid farewell to the woods, to my uncle, and to Aunt Jacoba, whom I had during my sojourn learnt to love as was her due. I, like Ann, rode home in a more sober mood than I had come in; for I was no more a child and an end must ever come to wild mirth.

My new squire Akusch rode behind me, and thus, on a fine November day, we made our way back to Nuremberg, in good health and spirits. The camels, the bear, and the monkeys, which had been taken from the vagabonds, were safely cared for in the Hallergarden, and the rogues themselves had been hanged — God have mercy on their souls!

Ann had had tidings of our home-coming, yet I

found her not at our house, and when I had waited for her till evening, and in vain, I sought her in her own dwelling. But no sooner had I crossed the threshold of the Venice house than I was aware that all was not well; inasmuch as that here, where there were ever half a dozen pairs of little feet hopping up and down, and no end of music and singing from morning till night, all was strangely silent. I stood to hearken, and I now perceived that the metal plate whereon the knocker fell was wrapped in felt.

This foreboded evil, and a vision rose before me of two biers; on one lay Ann, pale and dumb, and on the other my Cousin Götz's sweetheart, fair Gertrude, the copper-smith's daughter. Then I heard steps on the stair and the vision faded; and I breathed once more, for Ann's grandfather, the old lute-player Gottlieb Spiesz, came towards me, with deep lines of sorrow on his kind face and a finger on his lips; and he told me that his son was lying sick of a violent brain fever, and that Master Ulsenius had feared the worst since yestereve.

His voice broke with sheer grief; nevertheless his serving lad was carrying his lute after him, and as he gave me his hand to bid me good-day he told me that Ann was above tending her father. "And I," quoth he, and his voice was weary but not bitter, "I must go to work — there is so much needed here, and food drops into no man's lap! First to the Tetzels to teach the young ones a madrigal to sing for Master Jost's fiftieth birthday. And they count on your help

and your brother's, sweet Mistress. — Well, children, be happy while it is yet time!"

He passed his hand across his eyes, and glanced up at the top room where his son lay with aching head, and so went forth to teach light-hearted young creatures to sing festal rounds and catches.

In a minute I had Ann in my arms; yea, and she was as sweet and bright as ever. The stern duty she had had to do had been healthful, albeit she had good cause to fear for the future; for, with her father, the household would lose the bread-winner.

It was an unspeakable joy to me to be able to assure her of Herdegen's faithful love, and to repeat to her the many kind words he had spoken concerning her. And she was right glad to hear them; and whereas true love is a flower which, when it droops, needs but a little drop of dew to uplift it again, hers had already raised its head somewhat after my last letter.

And at this, the time of the worst sorrow she had known, another great comfort had been vouchsafed to her: Master Ulsenius and his good wife, having had her to lodge with them the night of her return from the forest, had taken much fancy to her, and the good-hearted leech, a man of great learning, had been fain to admit her to the use of his fine library. Thus I found Ann of brave cheer notwithstanding her woe; and if heartfelt prayers for a sick man might have availed him, it was no blame to me when her father made a sad and painful end on the fifth day after my

home-coming. When I heard the tidings meseemed that a cold hand had been laid on my glad faith; for it was hard indeed for a poor, short-sighted human soul to see to what end and purpose this man should have been snatched away in the prime of age and strength.

To keep his large family, to free the little house from debt, and to lay aside a small sum, he had undertaken, besides the duties of his place, the stewardship of certain private properties; thus he had many a time turned night into day, and finally, albeit a stalwart man, he had fallen ill of the brain fever which had carried him off. It seemed, then, that honest toil and brave diligence had but earned the heaviest dole that could befall a man in his state of life; namely: to depart from those he loved or ever he could provide for their future living.

We all followed him to the grave, and it was by the bier of her worthy father that Ann for the first time met my brother once more. There was a great throng present, and he could do no more than press her hand with silent ardor; yet, at the same time he met her eye with such a truthful gaze that it was as a promise, a solemn pledge of faithfulness.

The prebendary of Saint Laurence, Master von Hellfeld, spoke the funeral sermon, and that in a right edifying manner; and whereas he took occasion to say that our Lord and Redeemer would bid all to be his guests and hold Himself their debtor who should show true Christian love towards these who henceforth had no father, Herdegen privily clasped my hand tightly.

Kunz likewise was present, and standing by the body of the man who had ever loved him best of us three, he wept as sorely as though he had lost his own father.

The gentlemen of the council were all assembled to do the last honors to one whose office had brought them closely together, and I marked that more than one nudged his neighbor to note Ann's more than common beauty, who in her black weed stood among her young brethren and sisters as a consoling angel, who weepeth with them that weep and comforteth the sorrowing. And so it came about that I heard many a father of fair daughters confess that this maid had not her like for beauty in all Nuremberg. And this came to Herdegen's ears, and I could see that it uplifted his spirit and confirmed him in good purpose.

It soon befell that he might show by deed of what mind he was. Master Holzschuher, the notary, who was near of kin and a right good friend of Cousin Maud's, had been named guardian of his children by the deceased Master Spiesz, and he it was who, in our house one day, said that the widow and orphans were in better care than he had looked for, and could keep their little house over their heads if wealthy neighbors could be moved to open their purses and pay off a debt that was upon it. Then my brother sprang up and declared that the family of an upright and faithful servant of the State, and of a friend of the Schoppers, should have some better and more honorable means of living than beggars' pence. He was not yet of full age, but it was his intent to demand forthwith of our

guardian Im Hoff so much of that which would be his, as might be needed to release the house from the burden of debt; and albeit Master Holzschuher shook his head thereat, and this was no light thing that Herdegen had undertaken, he departed at once to seek his granduncle.

From him indeed he met with rougher treatment than he had looked for; for the old man made the diligent stewardship of these trust-moneys a point of honor, to the end that when he should give an account of them before the city council it might be seen, by the greatness of the sum, how wise and well advised he had been in getting increase. What my brother called "beggars' pence," he said, was a well-earned guerdon which did the dead clerk's family an honor and was no disgrace; he was indeed minded to pay one-third of the whole sum at his own charges. As to the moneys left to us three by our parents, not a penny thereof would he ever part with. Moreover, Ann's rare charm had touched even my grand-uncle's heart, and he must have been dull-witted indeed if he had not hit on Herdegen's true reasons; and these in his eyes would be the worst of the matter, forasmuch as he was firmly bent on bringing Ursula Tetzel and Herdegen together so soon as my brother should have won his doctor's hood.

Thus it came to pass that, for the first time, our grand-uncle parted from his favorite nephew in wrath, and when Herdegen came home with crimson cheeks and almost beside himself, he confessed to me that for the present he had not yet been so bold as to

tell the old man how deeply he was pledged to Ann, but in all else had told him the plain truth.

At supper Herdegen scarce ate a morsel, for he could not bring himself to endure that his betrothed should sink so low as to receive an alms. He rose from table sullen and grieved, and whereas Cousin Maud could not endure to see her favorite go to rest in so much distress of mind, she led him aside, and inasmuch as she had already guessed how matters stood betwixt him and Ann, not without some fears, she spoke to him kindly, and declared herself ready to free the Spiesz household from debt without any help of strangers. To see him and her dear Ann happy she would gladly make far greater sacrifices, for indeed she did not at all times know what she might do with her own money.

No later than next morning the matter was privily settled by our notary; and albeit Master Holzschuher did so dispose things as though the deceased had left money to pay the debt withal, Ann saw through this, whereas her beautiful mother did but thoughtlessly rejoice over such good fortune.

Henceforth it was Ann's little hand which ruled the fatherless household with steadfast thrift, while Mistress Giovanna, as had ever been her wont, lived only to take care of the children's garments, that they should be neat and clean, of the flowers in the window and the beautiful needlework, and to fondle the little ones, so soon as she had got through her light toil in the kitchen.

It was granted to her and hers that they should dwell henceforth forever in the house by the Pegnitz, humbly indeed, but honorably and without the aid of strangers. One alms to be sure was bestowed on them soon after the first day of each month, and that right privily; for at that time without fail a little packet in which were two Hungarian ducats was found on the threshold of the hall. And who was the giver of this kind token would have remained secret till doomsday had not Susan by chance, and to his great vexation, betrayed my brother Kunz. My grand-uncle had granted him three ducats a month since he had left school, and of these he ever privily gave two to help the household ruled over by Ann. Our old Susan it was who aided him in the matter, so, when he was by any means hindered from laying the little packet on the threshold, she had to find an excuse for going to the little house by the river.

The worshipful council and many friends whose good-will the deceased scribe had won, got the orphans into the best schools in the town, and what Ann had learned as head of the school at the Carthusian convent she now handed down to her younger sisters by diligent teaching; and, as of yore, she gave her most loving care to her little deaf and dumb brother.

CHAPTER XI.

HERDEGEN was to be back in Padua before Passion week, and I shall remember with thankfulness to the day of my death the few months after worthy Veit Spiesz's burial and before my brother's departure. Not a day passed without our meeting; and after my heart had moved me to tell Cousin Maud all that had happened, and Herdegen had given his consent, we were rid once for all of the mystery which had at first weighed on our souls.

Verily the worthy lady found it no light matter to look kindly on this early and ill-matched betrothal; yet had she not the heart, nor the power, to make any resistance. When two young folks who are dear to her are brimfull of high happiness, the woman who would turn them out of that Garden of Eden and spoil their present bliss with warnings of future woe must be of another heart and mind than Cousin Maud. She indeed foresaw grief to come in many an hour of mistrust by day and many a sleepless night, more especially by reason of her awe and dread of my grand-uncle; and indeed, she herself was not bereft of the old pride of race which dwells in every Nuremberger who is born under a knight's coat of arms. That Ann was poor

she held of no account; but that she was not of noble birth was indeed a grief and filled her with doubts. But then, when her best-beloved Herdegen's eyes shone so brightly, and she saw Ann cling to him with maidenly rapture, vexation and care were no more.

If I had sung a loud hymn of praise in the woods over their spring and autumn beauty — and verily it had welled up from my heart.— I was ready to think winter in the town no less gladsome, in especial under the shelter of a home so warm and well built as our old Schopper-hof.

In the last century, when, at the time of the Emperor *Carolus'* * coming to the throne, the guilds, under the leadership of the Gaisbarts and Pfauentritts, ** had risen against the noble families and the worshipful council, they accused the elders of keeping house not as beseemed plain citizens but after the manner of princes; and they were not far wrong, for indeed I have heard tell that when certain merchants from Scandinavia came to our city, they said that the dwelling of a Nuremberg noble was a match in every way for their king's palace.

As touching our house, it was four stories high, and with seven windows in every story; with well-devised

* Charles IV., 1348.

** Gaisbart (goat's beard) and Pfauentritt (peacock-strut), were nicknames given to the leaders of the guilds who rebelled against the patrician families in Nuremberg, from whom alone the aldermen or town-council could be elected. This patrician class originated in 1198 under the Emperor Henry IV., who ennobled 38 families of the citizens. They were in some sort comparable with the families belonging to the Signoria at Venice, from whom, in the same way, the great council was chosen.

oriels at the corners, and pointed turrets on the roof. The gables were on the street, in three steps; over the great house door there was our coat of arms, the three links of the Schoppers and the fool's head with cap and bells as a crest on the top of the casque. The middle windows of the first and second stories were of noble size, and there glittered therein bright and beautiful panes of Venice glass, whereas the other windows were of small roundels set in lead.

And while from outside it was a fine, fair house to look upon, I never hope to behold a warmer or more snug and comfortable dwelling than the living-rooms within which was our home the winter through; albeit I found the saloons and chambers in the palaces of the *Signori* at Venice loftier and more airy, and greater and grander. Whenever I have been homesick under the sunny blue sky of Italy, it was for the most part that I longed after the rich, fresh green foliage and flowing streams of my own land; but, next to them, after our pleasant chamber in the Schopper-house, with its warm, green-tiled stove, with the figures of the Apostles, and the corner window where I had spun so many a hank of fine yarn, and which was so especially mine own — although I was ever ready and glad to yield my right to it, when Herdegen required it to sit in and make love to his sweetheart.

The walls of this fine chamber were hung with Flanders tapestry, and I can to this day see the pictures which were so skilfully woven into it. That I loved best, from the time when I was but a small thing, was

the Birth of the Saviour, wherein might be seen the Mother and Child, oxen and asses, the three Holy Kings from the East — the goodliest of them all a blackamoor with a great yellow beard flowing down over his robes. On the other hangings a tournament might be seen; and I mind me to this day how that, when I was a young child, I would gaze up at the herald who was blowing the trumpet in fear lest his cheeks should burst, inasmuch as they were so greatly puffed out and he never ceased blowing so hard. Between the top of these hangings and the ceiling was a light wood cornice of oak-timber, on which my father, God rest him, had caused various posies to be carved of his own devising. You might here read:

> "Like a face our life may be
> To which love lendeth eyes to see."

Or again,

> "The Lord Almighty hides his glorious face
> That so we may not cease to seek his grace."

Or else,

> "The Lord shall rule my life while I sit still,
> And rule it rightly by his righteous will."

And whereas my father had loved mirthful song he had written in another place:

> "If life be likened to a thorny place
> Song is the flowery spray that lends it grace."

Some of these rhymes had been carved there by my grandfather, for example these lines:

"By horse and wain I've journeyed up and down,
Yet found no match for this my native town."

And under our coat of arms was this posy.

"While the chain on the scutcheon holds firm and fast
The fool on the crest will be game to the last."

Of the goodly carved seats, and the cushions covered with motley woven stuffs from the Levant, right pleasant to behold, of all the fine treasures on the walls, the Venice mirrors, and the metal cage with a grey parrot therein, which Jordan Kubbeling, the falconer from Brunswick, had given to my dear mother, I will say no more; but I would have it understood that all was clean and bright, well ordered and of good choice, and above all snug and warm. Nay, and if it had all been far less costly and good to look at, there was, as it were, a breath of home which must have gladdened any man's heart: inasmuch as all these goodly things were not of yesterday nor of to-day, but had long been a joy to many an one dear to us; so that our welfare in that dwelling was but the continuing of the good living which our parents and grandparents had known before us.

Howbeit, those who will read this writing know what a patrician's house in Nuremberg is wont to be; and he who hath lived through a like childhood him-

self needs not to be told how well hide and seek may be played in a great hall, or what various and merry pastime can be devised in the twilight, in a dining hall where the lights hang from the huge beams of the ceiling; and we for certain knew every game that was worthy to be named.

But by this time all this was past and gone; only the love of song would never die out in the dwelling of the man who had been well-pleased to hear himself called by his fellows "Schopper the Singer." Ah! how marvellous well did their voices sound, Ann's and my brother's, when they sang German songs to the lute or the mandoline, or perchance Italian airs, as they might choose. But there was one which I could never weary of hearing and which, meseemed, must work on Herdegen's wayward heart as a cordial. The words were those of Master Walther von der Vogelweirde, and were as follows:

"True love is neither man nor maid,
No body hath nor yet a soul,
Nor any semblance here below,
Its name we hear, itself unknown.
Yet without love no man may win
The grace and favor of the Lord.
Put then thy trust in those who love;
In no false heart may Love abide."

And when they came to the last lines Kunz would ofttimes join in, taking the bass part or *continuo* to the melody. Otherwise he kept modestly in the back-

ground, for since he had come to know that Herdegen and Ann were of one mind he waited on her as a true and duteous squire, while he was now more silent than in past time, and in his elder brother's presence almost dumb. Yet at this I marvelled not, inasmuch as I many a time marked that brethren are not wont to say much to each other, and even between friends the one is ready enough to be silent if the other takes the word. Moreover at Easter Kunz was likewise to quit home, and go to Venice at my granduncle's behest. Herdegen's love for his brother had, of a certainty, suffered no breach; but, like many another disciple of Minerva, he was disposed to look down on the votaries of Mercury.

Nevertheless the links of the Schopper chain, to which Ann had now been joined as a fourth, held together right bravely, and when we sang not, but met for friendly talk, our discourse was but seldom of worthless, vain matters, forasmuch as Herdegen was one of those who are ready and free of speech to impart what he had himself learned, and it was Ann's especial gift to listen keenly and question discreetly.

And what was there that my brother had not learned from the great Guarino, and the not less great Humanist, his disciple Vittorino da Feltre, at that time *Magistri* at Padua? And how he had found the time, in a right gay and busy life, to study not merely the science of law but also Greek, and that so diligently that his master was ever ready to laud him, was to me a matter for wonder. And how gladly we hearkened

while he told us of the great Plato, and gave us to know wherefore and on what grounds his doctrine seemed to him, Herdegen, sounder and loftier than that of Aristotle, concerning whom he had learned much erewhile in Nuremberg. And whereas I was moved to fear lest these works of the heathen should tempt him to stray from the true faith, my soul found comfort when he proved to us that so glorious a lamp of the Church as Saint Augustine had followed them on many points. Also Herdegen had written out many verses of Homer's great song from a precious written book, and had learned to master them well from the teaching of the doctor of Feltre. They were that portion in which a great hero in the fight, or ever he goes forth to battle, takes leave of his wife and little son; and to me and Ann it seemed so fine and withal so touching, that we could well understand how it should be that Petrarca wrote that no more than to behold a book of Homer made him glad, and that he longed above all things to clasp that great man in his arms.

Indeed, the poems and writings of Petrarca yielded us greater delights than all the Greek and Roman heathen. Master Ulsenius had before now lent them to Ann, and she like a bee from a flower would daily suck a drop of honey from their store. Yet was there one testimony of Petrarca's — who was, for sure, of all lovers the truest — which she loved above all else. In the dreadful time of the Black Death which came as a scourge on all the world, and chiefly on Italy, in the past century, the lady to whom he had vowed the

deepest and purest devotion, appeared to him in a dream one fair spring morning as an angel of Heaven. And whereas he inquired of her whether she were in life, she answered him in these words: "See that thou know me; for I am she who led thee out of the path of common men, inasmuch as thy young heart clung to me." And lo! on that very sixth of April, which brought him that vision, one and twenty years after that he had first beheld her, Laura had made a pious end.

With beseeching eyes Ann would repeat to her best beloved, as they sat together in the oriel bay, how that Laura had led her Petrarca from the ways of common men; and it went to my heart to hear her entreat him, with timid and yet fond and heartfelt prayer, to grant to her to be his Laura and to guide him far from the beaten path, forasmuch as it was narrow and low for his winged spirit. And while she thus spoke her great eyes had a marvellous clear and glorious light, and when I looked in her face wrapped in the veil of her mourning for her father, my spirit grew solemn, as though I were in church. Herdegen must have felt this likewise, methinks, for he would bend the knee before her and hide his face in her lap, and kiss her hands again and again.

But these solemn hours were few.

First and last it was a happy fellowship, free and gay, though mingled with earnest, that held us together; and when Ann's father had been some few weeks dead our old gleefulness came back to us again,

and then, after gazing at her for a while, Herdegen would suddenly strike the lute and sing the old merry round:

"Come, sweetheart, come to me.
Ah how I pine for thee!
Ah, how I pine for thee!
Come, sweetheart, come to me.
Sweet rosy lips to kiss,
Come then and bring me bliss,
Come then and bring me bliss,
Sweet rosy lips to kiss!"

And we would all join in, even Cousin Maud; nay and she would look another way or quit the chamber, stealing away behind Kunz and holding up a warning finger, when she perceived how his Ann's "sweet, rosy lips" tempted Herdegen's to kiss them. But there were other many songs, and ofttimes, when we were in a more than common merry mood, we strange young things would sing the saddest tales and tunes we knew, such as that called "Two Waters," and yet were we only the more gay.

Herdegen could not be excused from his duty of paying his respects from time to time to the many friends of our honorable family, yet would he ever keep away from dances and feastings, and when he was compelled to attend I was ever at his side, and it was a joy to me to see how courteous, and withal how cold, was his demeanor to all other ladies.

The master's fiftieth birthday was honored in due

course at the Tetzels' house, and to please my grand-uncle, Herdegen could not refuse to do his part in song and in the dance, and likewise to lead out Ursula, the daughter of the house, in the dances. Nor did he lose his gay but careless mien, although she would not quit his side and chose him to dance with her in "The Sulkers," a dance wherein the man and maid first turn their backs on each other and then make it up and kiss. But when it came to this, maiden shame sent the blood into my cheeks; for at the sound of the music, in the face of all the company she fell into his arms, as it were by mishap; and it served her right when he would not kiss her lips, which she was ready enough to offer, but only touched her brow with his.

Forasmuch as she had danced with him the Dance of Honor or first dance, it was his part to beg her hand for the last dance — the "grandfather's dance;"* but she would fain punish him for the vexation he had caused her and turned her back upon him. He, however, would have none of this; he grasped her hand ere she was aware of him, and dragged her after him. It was vain to struggle, and soon his strong will was a pleasure to her, and her countenance beamed again full brightly, when as this dance requires, he had led the way with her, the rest all following, through chamber and hall, kitchen and courtyard, doors and windows, nay, and even the stables. In the course of this dance each one seized some utensil or house-gear, as we do to this day; only never a broom, which would bring

* Still a well-known country dance in Germany.

ill-luck. Ursula had snatched up a spoon, and when the mad sport was ended and he had let go her hand, she rapped him with it smartly on the arm and cried: "You are still what you ever were, in the dance at least!"

But my brother only said: "Then will I try to become not the same, even in that."

Round the Christmas tree and at the sharing of gifts which Cousin Maud made ready for Christmas eve, we were all friendly and glad at heart, and Ann found her way to join us after that she had put the little ones to bed.

Herdegen said she herself was the dearest gift for which he could thank the Christ-child, and he had provided for her as a costly token the great Petrarca's heroic poem of *Africa*, in which he sings the deeds of the noble Scipio, and likewise his smaller poems, all written in a fair hand. They made three neat books, and on the leathern cover, the binder, by Herdegen's orders, had stamped the words, "ANNA-LAURA," in a wreath of full-blown roses. Nor was she slow to understand their intent, and her heart was uplifted with such glad and hopeful joy that the Christ-child for a certainty found no more blissful or thankful creature in all Nuremberg that Christmas eve.

The manifold duties which filled up all her days left her but scant time wherein to work for him she loved; nevertheless she had wrought with her needle a letter pouch, whereon the Schoppers' arms were embroidered in many colored silks, and the words *Agape*

and *Pistis*—which are in Greek Love and Faithfulness —in Greek letters with gold thread. Cousin Maud had dipped deep into her purse and likewise into her linen-press, and on the table under the Christmas-tree lay many a thing fit for the bride-chest of a maid of good birth; and albeit Ann could not but rejoice over these gifts for their own sake, she did so all the more gladly, inasmuch as she guessed that Cousin Maud was well-disposed to speed her marriage.

We were all, indeed, glad and thankful; all save the Magister, whose face was ill-content and sour by reason that he had culled many verses and maxims concerning love, for the most part from the Greek and Latin poets, and yet all his attempts to repeat them before Ann came to nothing, inasmuch as she was again and again taken up with Herdegen and with me, after she had once shaken hands with him and given him her greetings.

At supper he was as dumb as the carp which were served, and it befell that for the first time Herdegen took his seat between him and his heart's beloved; and verily I was grieved for him when, after supper, he withdrew downcast to his own chamber. The rest of us went forth to Saint Sebald's church, where that night there would be midnight matins, as there was every year, and a mass called the Christ mass. Cousin Maud and Kunz were with us, as in the old happy days when we were children and when we never missed; and in the streets as we went, we met all manner of folks singing gladly

Puer natus in Bethlehem,
Sing, rejoice, Jerusalem!

or the carol:

Congaudeat turba fidelium!
Natus est rex, Salvator omnium
*In Bethlehem.**

and we joined in; and at last all went together to see Ann to her home.

Next evening there were more costly gifts, but albeit *Puer natus* was still to be heard in the streets, we no longer were moved to join in.

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* With one consent, ye faithful, sing
To Christ, now born our Lord and King
In Bethlehem.

CHAPTER XII.

EVERY Christmas all my grand-uncle's kith and kin, or so many of them as were on good terms with him, assembled in the great house of the Im Hoffs. Everything in that dwelling spoke of ease and wealth, and no banqueting-hall could be more brightly lighted or more richly decked than that where the old man welcomed us on the threshold; and yet, how well soever the hearth was piled or the stove heated, a chill breath seemed to blow there.

While great and small were rejoicing over the grand old knight's bounty he himself would ever stand apart, and his calm, hueless countenance expressed no change. Meseemed he cared but little for the pleasure he gave us all; yet was he not idle in the matter, nor left it to others; for there was no single gift which he had not himself chosen as befitting him to whom it should be given.

The trade of his great house was for the most part with Venice, and it would have been easy to fancy oneself in some fine *palazzo* on the grand canal as one marked the carpets, the mirrors, the brocade, and the vessels in his house; and not a few of his tokens had likewise been brought from thence.

Before this largesse in his own house he was wont to bestow another, and a very noble one, on the old men and women of the poor folks in the town; and when this was over he went with them to the church of Saint Aegidius, and washed the feet of about a score of them, which act of penitential humility he was wont to repeat in Passion week.

Then when he had welcomed his kin, each one to his house, he would say to such as thanked him, if it were a child, very soberly: "Be a good child." But for elder folks he had no more than "It is well," or an almost churlish: "That is enough."

This evening he had given me a gown of costly brocade of Cyprus; to Kunz everything that a Junker might need on his travels; and to Herdegen the same sword which he himself had in past time worn at court; the hilt was set with gems and ended in the lion rampant, couped, of the Im Hoffs. Ursula Tetzel, like me, had had a gown-piece which was lying near by the sword.

Herdegen, holding the jewelled weapon in his hand, thanked his grand-uncle, who muttered as was his wont: "'Tis well, 'tis well," when Jost Tetzel put in his word, saying that the gift of a sword was supposed to part friends, but that this ill-effect might be hindered if he who received it made a return-offering to the giver, and so the token was made into a purchase.

At this Herdegen hastened to take out a gold pin set with sapphire stones, which Cousin Maud had given him, from his neck-kerchief, to offer it to his

uncle; but the elder would have nothing to say to such foolishness, and pushed the pin away. But then when my brother did not cease, but besought him to accept it, inasmuch as he cared so greatly for his uncle's fatherly kindness, the old knight cried that he wanted no such sparkling finery, but that the day might come when he should require some payment and that Herdegen was then to remember that he was in his debt.

At this minute they were hindered from further speech by the servants, who came in to bid us to supper, and there stood ready wild fowl and fish, fruits and pastry, with the rarest wines and the richest vessels; the great middle table and the side buffet alike made such a show as though Pomona, Ceres, Bacchus, and Plutus had heaped it with prodigal hand. Yet was there no provision for merry-making. My grand-uncle loved to be quit of his guests at an early hour; hence no table was laid for them to sit down to meat, and each one held his plate in one hand.

Presently, as I strove to get free of young Master Vorchtel who had served me — and by the same token made love to me — I found my cousin in speech with my grand-uncle, and the last words of his urgent discourse, spoken as I came up with them, were that a woman of sound understanding, as she commonly seemed, should no longer suffer such a state of things.

Then Cousin Maud answered him, saying: "But you, my noble and worshipful Cousin Im Hoff, know how that a Schopper is ever ready to run his head against a wall. If we strive to thwart this hot-

headed boy, he will of a certainty defy us; but if we leave him for a while to go his own way, the waters will not be dammed up, but will run to waste in the sand."

This was evil hearing, and much as it vexed me Ursula chafed me even more, whereas she made a feint of caring for none of the company present excepting only Sir Franz — who was yet her housemate — and being still pale and weak needed a friendly woman's hand for many little services, inasmuch as even now he could scarce use his right arm. Nay, and he seemed to like Ursula well enough as his helper; albeit he owed all her sweet care and loving glances to Herdegen, for she never bestowed them but when he chanced to look that way.

When we all took leave my grand-uncle bid Herdegen stay, and Kunz waited on us; but notwithstanding all his merry quips as we went home, not once could we be moved to laughter. My heart was indeed right heavy; a bitter drop had fallen into it by reason of Cousin Maud. I had ever deemed her incapable of anything but what was truest and best, and she had proved herself a double-dealer; and young as I was, and rejoicing in life, I said, nevertheless, in my soul's dejection, that if life was such that every poor human soul must be ever armed with doubt, saying, "Whom shall I trust or doubt?" then it was indeed a hard and painful journey to win through.

I slept in my cousin's room, and albeit Cousin Maud wist not that I had overheard her counsel given

to my grand-uncle, she kept out of my way that night, and we neither of us spoke till we said good-night. Then could I no longer refrain myself, and asked whether it were verily and indeed her intent to part Herdegen from Ann.

And her ill-favored countenance grew strangely puckered and her bosom heaved till suddenly she cried beside herself: "Cruel! Unhappy! Oh! It will eat my heart out!" And she sobbed aloud, while I did the same, crying:

"But you love them both?"

"That I do, and that is the very matter," she broke in sadly enough. "Herdegen, and Ann! Why, I know not which I hold the dearer. But find me a wiser man in all Nuremberg than your grand-uncle. But verily, merciful Virgin, I know not what I would be at — I know not. . . . !"

On this I forgot the respect due to her and put in: "You know not?" And whereas she made no reply, I railed at her, saying: "And yet you gave her the linen, and half the matters for her house-gear as a Christmas gift, as though they were known for a bride and groom to all the town. As old as you are and as wise, can you take pleasure in a love-match and even speed it forward as you have done, and yet purpose in your soul to hinder it at last? And is this the truth and honesty whereof early and late you have ever taught me? Is this being upright and faithful, or not rather speaking with two tongues?"

My fiery blood had again played me an evil trick, and I repented me when I perceived what great grief my violent speech had wrought in the dear soul. Never had I beheld her so feeble and doubting, and in a minute I was in her arms and a third person might have marvelled to hear us each craving pardon, she for her faint-hearted fears, and I for my unseemly outbreak. But in that hour I became her friend, and ceased to be no more than her child and fondling.

Herdegen was to be ready to set forth before Passion week; but ere he quitted home he made all the city ring with his praises, for, whereas he had hitherto won fame in the school of arms only, by the strength and skill of his arm, he now outdid every other in the procession of masks. Albeit this custom is still kept up to this very day, yet many an one may have forgotten how it first had its rise, although in my young days it was well known to most folks.

This then is to record, that in the days when the guilds were in revolt against the city council, the cutlers and the fleshers alone remained true to the noble families, and whereas they refused to take any guerdon for their faithfulness, which must have been paid them at the cost of the rest, they craved no more than the right of a making a goodly show in a dance and procession at the Carnival; and they were by the same token privileged at that time to wear apparel of velvet and silk, like gentle folks of noble and knightly degree.

Now this dance and its appurtenances were known

at the masked show, * and inasmuch as the aid of the governing class was needed to keep the streets clear for the throng of craftsmen, and as likewise the yearly outlay was beyond their means, the sons of the great houses took a pride in paying goodly sums for the right of taking a place in the procession. And as for our high-spirited young lord, skilled as he was with his weapon, he had seen and taken part in many such gay carnival doings among the Italians, and it was a delight to him to join in the like sport at home, and many were fain to gaze at him rather than at the guilds.

They assembled under the walls in two bands, and marched past the town hall and from thence to a dance of both guilds. Each had a dance of its own. The Fleshers' was such a dance as in England is called a country dance ** and they held leather-straps twisted to look like sausages; the cutlers' dance was less clumsy, and they carried naked swords.

But the show which most delighted the bystanders was the procession of masks, wherein, indeed, there were many things pleasant and fair to behold.

A party of men in coarse raiment called the men of the woods, carrying sheaves of oak boughs with acorns, and a number of mummers in fools' garb, wielding wooden bats, cleared the way for the procession; first

* Schembartlaufen from Schönbart (or Scheinbart?) meaning a mask.

** *Zäunertanz.* The dancers stood in rows (forming a sort of hedge, whence *Hedgerow dance*), holding hands while others ran in and out, a common figure in country-dances.

then came minstrels, with drums and pipes and trumpets and bag-pipes, and merry bells ringing out withal. Next came one on horseback with nuts, which he flung down among the children, whereat there was merry scuffling and screaming on the ground. From the windows likewise and balconies there was no end of the laughter and cries; the young squires gave the maids and ladies who sat there no peace for the flowers and sweetmeats they cast up at them, and eggs filled with rose-water.

This year, whereof I write, many folks in the procession wore garments of the same color and shape; but among them there were some who loved a jest, and were clothed as wild men and women, or as black-a-moors, ogres that eat children, ostrich-birds, and the like. Last of all came the chief glory of the show, various great buildings and devices drawn by horses: a Ship of Fools, and behind that a wind-mill, and a fowler's decoy wherein Fools, men and women both, were caught, and other such pastimes.

My Herdegen had mingled with this wondrous fellowship arrayed as a knight crusader leading three captive Saracen princes; namely, the two young Masters Löffelholz and Schlebitzer, who had stirred him to dress in the fencing-school, mounted on horses, and between them my squire Akusch on the bear-leader's camel, all in white as a Son of the Desert; and the three of them fettered with chains made of wood.

My grand-uncle had lent Herdegen the suit of mail he himself had worn in his youth at a tournament;

Cousin Maud had provided his white cloak with a red cross, and as he rode forth on a noble black steed in mail-harness with scarlet housings — the finest and stoutest horse in the Im Hoffs' stables — and his golden hair shining in the sun, many a maid could not take her eyes off from him.

Kunz, in the garb of a fool, hither and thither, nay, and everywhere at once, doubtless had the better sport; but Herdegen's heart beat the higher, for he could hear a thousand voices proclaiming him the most comely and his troop the most princely of all; from many a window a flower was shed on him, or a ribband, or a knot. At last, when the dance was all over, the guilds with the town-pipers betook them to the head constable's quarters, where they were served with drink and ate the Shrove-Tuesday meal of fish which was given in their honor. When the procession was past and gone my grand-uncle bid Herdegen go to him, and that which the old man then said and did to move him to give up his love was shrewdly planned and not without effect on his mind. After looking at him from head to foot, saying nothing but with no small contentment, he clapped him kindly on the shoulder and led him, as though by chance, up to the Venice mirror in the dining-hall. Then pointing to the image before him: "A Tancred!" he cried, "a Godfrey! Richard of the Lion-heart! And the bride a miserable scrivener's wench! — a noble bride!" Thereupon Herdegen fired up and began to speak in praise of Ann's rare and choice beauty; but his

guardian stopped him short, laid his arm round his shoulders, and muttered in his ear that in his young days likewise youths of noble birth had to be sure made love to the fair daughters of the common citizens, but the man who could have thought of courting one of them in good faith. . . .

Here he broke off with a sharp laugh, and drawing the boy closer to him, cried:

"No harm is meant my Tancred! And you may keep the black horse in remembrance of this hour."

It was old Berthold, my uncle's body-servant who told me all this; Herdegen when he came home answered none of my questions. He would not grant my prayer that he should show himself to Ann in his knight's harness, and said somewhat roughly that she loved not such mummery. Thus it was not hard to guess what was in his mind; but how came it to pass that this old man, whose princely wife had wrought ruin to his peace and happiness, could so diligently labor to lead him he best loved on earth into the like evil course? And among many matters of which I lacked understanding there was yet this one: Wherefore should Eppelein, who so devoutly loved his master, and who knew right well how to value a young maid's beauty — and why should my good Susan and the greater part of our servitors have turned so spitefully against Ann, to whom in past days they were ever courteous and serviceable, since they had scented a betrothal between her and my eldest brother?

From the first I had been but ill-pleased to see

Herdegen so diligent over this idle sport and spending so many hours away from his sweetheart, when he was so soon to quit us all. Nevertheless I had not the heart to admonish him, all the more as in many a dull hour he was apt to believe that, for the sake of his love, he must need deny himself sundry pleasures which our father had been free to enjoy; and I weened that I knew whence arose this faint-heartedness which was so little akin to his wonted high spirit.

Looking backward, a little before this time, I note first that Ann had not been able to keep her love-matters a secret from her mother. Albeit the still young and comely widow had solemnly pledged herself to utter no word of the matter, like most Italian women — and may be many a Nuremberger — she could not refrain herself from telling that of which her heart and brain were full, deeming it great good fortune for her child and her whole family; and she had shared the secret with all her nearest friends. Eight days before Shrove Tuesday Cousin Maud and we three Schoppers had been bidden to spend the evening in the house by the river, and Dame Giovanna, kind-hearted as ever, but not far-seeing, had likewise bidden her father-in-law, the lute-player, and Adam Heyden from the tower, and Ann's one and only aunt, the widow of Rudel Hennelein.

This Hennelein had been the town bee-master, the chief of the bee-keepers, who, then as now, had their business out in the Lorenzer-Wald. His duties had been to hold an assize for the bee-keepers three times in the

year at a village called Feucht, and to lend an ear to their complaints; and albeit he had fulfilled his office without blame, he had dwelt in strife with his wife, and being given to rioting, he was wont rather to go to the tavern than sit at table with his cross-grained wife.

When he presently died there was but small leaving, and the widow in the little house in the milk market had need to look twice at every farthing, although she had not chick nor child. And whereas full half of the offerings sent by the bee-keepers to help out their master's widow were in honey, she strove to turn this to the best account, and to this end she would by no means sell it to the dealers who would offer to take it, but carried it herself in neat little crocks, one at a time, to the houses of the rich folks, whereby her gains were much the greater.

Whereas her husband had been a member of the worshipful class of magistrates, she deemed that such trading ill-beseemed her dignity; and she at all times wore a great fur hat as large round as a cart-wheel of fair size, and all the other array of a well-to-do housewife, though in truth somewhat threadbare. Then she would offer her honey as a gift to the mothers of children for their dear little ones; nor could she ever be moved to name a price for her gift, inasmuch as it was not fitting that a bee-master's widow should do so, while it was all to her honor when a little bounty was offered as civil return.

Her honey was good enough, and the children were ever glad to see her; all the more so for that they had

their sport of her behind her back, inasmuch as that she was a laughable little body, who had a trick of repeating the last word of every sentence she spoke. Thus she would say not: "Ah! here comes Kunz," but, "Here comes Kunz Kunz." Moreover, she ever held her head between her two hands, tightly, as though with that great fur cap her thin neck were in danger of breaking.

In this way she had dealings with most of our noble families; and the young ones would call her not Hennelein, as her name was, but Henneleinlein, in jest at her foolish trick of repeating her last word.

So long as I could remember, Mistress Henneleinlein had been wont to bring honey to our house, and had received from Cousin Maud, besides many a bright coin, likewise sundry worn but serviceable garments as "remembrances." And Herdegen foremost of us all had been ready to make sport of her; but it had come to his knowledge that she was ever benign to lovers, and had helped many a couple to come together.

The glad tidings that her niece was chosen by fate to rule over the house of the Schoppers had filled her above all others with pride and contentment, and Dame Giovanna having told her this secret and then bidden her to meet us, she stuck so closely to Herdegen that Ann was filled with vexation and fears. I could not but mark that my brother was sorely ill-pleased when Dame Henneleinlein patted his arm; and when she kissed his sweetheart on the lips he shrank as though some one had laid a foul hand on his light-hued

velvet doublet. He had always felt a warm friendship for the worthy lute-player, who was a master in his own art; yea, and many a time had he right gladly mounted the tower-stairs to see the old organist; but now, to be treated as a youngster of their own kith by these two good men filled him with loathing; for it may well be that many an one whom we are well pleased to seek and truly value in his own home and amid his own company, seems another man when he makes claim to live with us as one of ourselves.

Cousin Maud had not chosen to accept Dame Giovanna's bidding, perchance for my grand-uncle's sake; she thus escaped the vexation of seeing Herdegen, on this first night spent with his future kindred, so silent and moody that he was scarce like himself. He turned pale and bit his nether lip, as he never did but when he was mastering his temper with great pains, when Mistress Henneleinlein who had hitherto known him only as a roystering young blade and now interpreted his reserve and silence after her own fashion noted mysteriously that the Junker would have to take a large family with his young bride — though, indeed, there was a hope that the burden might ere long be lighter. For she went on to say, with a leer at Mistress Giovanna, that so comely a step-mother would have suitors in plenty, and she herself had one in her eye, if he were but brought to the point, who would provide abundantly not only for the mother but for all the brood of little ones.

This and much more did he himself repeat to me

as we walked home, speaking with deep ire and in tones of wrath; and what else Dame Henneleinlein had poured into his ear was to me not so much unpleasing as a cause of well-grounded fears, inasmuch as the old body had told him that the man who was fain to pay his court to Mistress Giovanna was none other than the coppersmith, Ulman Pernhart, the father of the fair maid for whose sake Aunt Jacoba had banished her only son.

In vain did I in all honesty speak the praises of the coppersmith; Herdegen turned a deaf ear, even as my uncle and aunt had done. The thought that his wife should ever be required to honor this handicraftsman, if only as a step-father, and that he should hear himself addressed by him as "Son," was too shrewd a thrust.

The next morning the Junkers had carried him off to the school of arms and then to the gentlemen's tavern to take his part in the masquerade; and when, at a later hour, after the throng had scattered, Ann came to our house, her lover was not at home: he had gone off again to the revels at the tavern where he would meet such workingmen as his sweetheart's future step-father.

At the same time, as it fell, Brother Ignatius, of the order of Grey Friars, had come many times to hold forth at our house, by desire of my grand-uncle whose almoner he was, and when Herdegen announced to us on Ash Wednesday that the holy man had craved to be allowed to travel in his company as far as Ingol-

stadt, I foresaw no good issue; for albeit the Father was a right reverend priest, whose lively talk had many a time given me pleasure, it must for certain be his intent to speed my uncle's wishes.

In spite of all, Herdegen was in such deep grief at departing that I put away all doubts and fears.

Ann, who felt in all matters as he felt and put her whole trust in him, was wise enough to know that he could have no bond with her kith and kin; nay, that it must be hard on him to have to call such a woman as Mistress Henneleinlein his aunt. Also he and she had agreed that hereafter he should dwell no more at Nuremberg, but seek some office and duty in the Imperial service; and Sir Franz had been diligent in asking his uncle's good word, he being one of those highest in power at the Emperor's court.

Now, when a short time before his departing they were alone with me, Ann, bearing in mind this pact they had made, cried out: "You promise me we shall build our nest in some place far from hence; and be it where it may, wherever we may be left to ourselves and have but each other, a happy life must await us."

At this his eyes flashed, and he cried with a lad's bold spirit:

"With a doctor's hood, at the Emperor's court, I shall ere long be councillor, and at last, God willing, Chancellor of the Realm!"

After this they spoke yet many loving and touching words, and when he was already in the saddle and waved her a last farewell, tears flowed from his eyes —

I saw them for certain. — And at that moment I besought the Lord that He would rather chastise and try me with pain and grief, but bring these two together and let their marriage be crowned by the highest bliss ever vouchsafed to human hearts.

CHAPTER XIII.

SPRING was past, and again the summer led me and Ann back into the green wood. Aunt Jacoba's sickness was no whit amended, and the banishment of her only and comely son gnawed at her heart; but the more she needed tending and cheering the more Ann could do for her, and the dearer she became to the heart of the sick woman.

Kunz was ever in Venice. Herdegen wrote right loving letters at first from Padua, but then they came less often, and the last Ann ever had to show me was a mere feint which pleased me ill indeed, inasmuch as, albeit it was full of big words, it was empty of tidings of his life or of his heart's desire. What all this must mean Ann, with her clear sense and true love, could not fail to see; nevertheless she ceased not from building on her lover's truth; or, if she did not, she hid that from all the world, even from me.

We came from the forest earlier than we were wont, on Saint Maurice's day, forasmuch as that Ann could not be longer spared and, now more than ever, I could not bear to leave her alone.

Uncle Christian rode to the town with us, and if he had before loved her well, in this last long time of our all being together he had taken her yet more into his

heart. And now, whereas he had given her the right to warn him against taking too much wine, he was fain to call her his little watchman, by reason that it is the watchman's part to give warning of the enemy's onset.

But while Ann was so truly beloved at the Forest lodge, on her return home she found no pleasant welcome. In her absence the coppersmith Pernhart had wooed her mother in good earnest, and the eldest daughter not being on the spot, had sped so well that the widow had yielded. Ann once made bold to beseech her mother with due reverence to give up her purpose, but she fell on her child's neck, as though Ann were the mother, entreating her, with many tears, to let her have her will. Ann of a certainty would not now be long under her roof to cherish the younger children, and it was not in her power as their mother to guide them in the way in which their father would have them to walk. For this Ulman Pernhart was the fittest man.

Her dead husband had been a schoolmate of her suitor's, and of his brother the very reverend lord Bishop, and he had thought highly of Master Ulman. This it was gave her strength to follow the prompting of her heart. In this way did the mother try to move her child to look with favor on the desire of her fiery Italian heart, now shame-faced and coaxing, and anon with tears in her eyes; and albeit the widow was past five and thirty and her suitor nigh upon fifty, yet no man seeing the pair together would have made sport of their love. The Venice lady had lost so little of

her youthful beauty and charms that it was in truth a marvel; and as to Master Pernhart, he was not a man to be overlooked, even among many.

As he was at this time he might be taken for the very pattern of a stalwart and upright German master-craftsman; nay, nor would a knight's harness of mail have ill-beseemed him. Or ever he had thought of paying court to Mistress Giovanna I had heard the prebendary Master von Hellfeld speak of Pernhart as a right good fellow, of whom the city might be proud; and he then spoke likewise of Master Ulman's brother, who had become a servant of the Holy Church, and while yet a young man had been raised to the dignity of a bishop.

When the great schism had come to a happy ending, and one Head, instead of three, ruled the Church, Pope Martin V. had chosen him to sit in his council and kept him at Rome, where he was one of the powers of the *Curia*.

Albeit his good German name of Pernhart was now changed to Bernardi, he had not ceased to love his native town and his own kin, and had so largely added to the wealth and ease of his own mother and his only brother that the coppersmith had been able to build himself a dwelling little behind those of the noble citizens. He had been forlorn in his great house of late, but no such cause as that was needed to move him to cast his eye on the fair widow of his very reverend brother's best friend.

While Ann was away in the forest Mistress Giovanna had let Pernhart into the secret of her daugh-

ter's betrothal to Herdegen, and so soon as the young maid was at home again he had spoken to her of the matter, telling her, in few but hearty words, that she would be ever welcome to his house and there fill the place of his lost Gertrude; but that if she was fain to wed an honest man, he would make it his business to provide her outfit.

These things, and much more, inclined me in his favor, little as I desired that he should wed the widow, for Herdegen's sake; and when I met him for the first time as betrothed to Ann's mother, and the grand-looking man shook my hand with hearty kindness, and then thanked me with warmth and simplicity for whatsoever I had done for her who henceforth would be his dearest and most precious treasure, I returned the warm grasp of his hand with all honesty, and it was from the bottom of my heart that I answered him, saying that I gladly hailed him as a new friend, albeit I could not hope for the same from my brother.

He heard this with a strange smile, half mournful, but, meseemed, half proud; then he held forth his horny, hard-worked hand, and said that to be sure it was an ill-matched pair when such a hand as that should clasp a soft and white one such as might come out of a velvet sleeve; that whereas, in order to win the woman he loved, he had taken her tribe of children into the bargain, and fully purposed to have much joy of them and be a true father to them, my lord brother, if his love were no less true, must make the best of his father-in-law, whose

honor, though he was but of simple birth, was as clean as ever another man's in the eyes of God.

And as we talked I found there was more and nobler matter in his brain and heart than I had ever weened I might find in a craftsman. We met often and learned to know each other well, and one day it fell that I asked him whether he had in truth forgiven the Junker through whom he had lost the one he loved best.

He forthwith replied that I was not to lay the blame on one whom he would ever remember as a brave and true-hearted youth, inasmuch as it was not my cousin, but he himself who had put an end to the love-making between Götz and Gertrude. It was after the breach between Götz and his parents that it had been most hard to turn a deaf ear to the prayers of the devoted lover and of his own child. But, through all, he had borne in mind the doctrine by which his father had ever ruled his going, namely, not to bring on our neighbor such grief as would make our own heart sore. Therefore he examined himself as to what he would feel towards one who should make his child to wed against his will with a suitor he liked not; and whereas his own dignity as a man and his care for his daughter's welfare forbade that he should give her in marriage to a youth whose kinsfolks would receive her with scorn and ill-feeling, rather than with love and kindness, he had at last set his heart hard against young Waldstromer, whom he had loved as his own son, and forced him to go far away from his sweetheart. I, in

my heart, was strangely wroth with my cousin in that he had not staked his all to win so fair a maid; nay, and I made so bold as to confess that in Gertrude's place I should have gone after my lover whithersoever he would, even against my father's will.

And again that proud smile came upon Ulman Pernhart's bearded lips, and his eye flashed fire as he said: "My life moves in a narrow round, but all that dwell therein bend to my will as the copper bends under my hammer. If you think that the Junker gave in without a struggle you are greatly mistaken; after I had forbidden him the house, he had tempted Gertrude to turn against me and was ready to carry her off; nay, and would you believe it, my own mother sided with the young ones. The priest even was in readiness to marry them privily, and they would have won the day in spite of me. But the eyes of jealousy are ever the sharpest; my head apprentice, who was madly in love with the maid, betrayed the plot, and then, Mistress Margery, were things said and done — things concerning which I had best hold my peace. And if you crave to know them, you may ask my mother. You will see some day, if you do not scorn to enter my house and if you gain her friendship — and I doubt not that you will, albeit it is not granted to every one — she will be glad enough to complain of my dealings in this matter — mine, her own son's, although on other points she is wont to praise my virtues over loudly."

This discourse raised my cousin once more to his

old place in my opinion, and I knew now that the honest glance of his blue eyes, which doubtless had won fair Gertrude's heart, was trustworthy and true.

Master Ulman Pernhart was married in a right sober fashion to fair Mistress Giovanna, and I remember to this day seeing them wed in Saint Laurence's Church. It was a few months before this that I was taken for the first time to a dance at the town hall. There, as soon as I had forgotten my first little fears, I took my pleasure right gladly to the sound of the music, and I verily delighted in the dance. But albeit I found no lack of young ladies my friends, and still less of youths who would fain win my favor, I nevertheless lost not the feeling that I had left part of my very being at home; nay, that I scarce had a right to these joys, since my brothers were in a distant land and Ann could not share them with me, and while I was taking my pleasure she had the heart-ache.

Then was there a second dance, and a third and fourth; and at home there came a whole troop of young men in their best apparel to ask of Cousin Maud, each after his own fashion, to be allowed to pay court to me; but albeit they were all of good family, and to many a one I felt no dislike, I felt nothing at all like love as I imagined it, and I would have nothing to say to any one of them. And all this I took with a light heart, for which Cousin Maud many a time, — and most rightly — reproved me.

But at that time, and yet more as the months went on, I hardly knew my own mind; another fate than my

own weighed most on my soul; and I thought so little of my own value that meseemed it could add to no man's happiness to call me his. All else in life passed before my eyes like a shadow; a time came when all joy was gone from me, and my suitors sought me in vain in the dancing-hall, for a great and heavy grief befell me.

All was at an end — even now I scarce can bear to write the words — between Ann and Herdegen; and by no fault of hers, but only and wholly by reason of his great and unpardonable sin.

But I will write down in order how it came about.

So early as at Martinmas I heard from Cousin Maud — and my grand-uncle had told her — that Herdegen had quitted Padua and that it was his intent to take the degree of doctor at Paris whither the famous Gerson's great genius was drawing the studious youth of all lands; and his reason for this was that a bloody fray had made the soil of Italy too hot for his feet. These tidings boded evil; all the more as neither we nor Ann had a word from Herdegen in his own hand to tell us that he had quitted the country and his school. Then, in my fear and grief, I could not help going to my grand-uncle, but he would have nothing to say to me or to Cousin Maud, or else he put us off with impatient answers, or empty words that meant nothing.

Thus we lived in dread and sorrow, till at last, a few days before Pernhart was married, a letter came to me from Eppelein, and I have it before me now, among other papers all gone yellow.

"From your most duteous and obedient servant Eppelein Göckel to the lady Margery Schopper," was the superscription. And he went on to excuse himself in that he knew not the art of writing, and had requested the service of the *Magister* of the young Count von Solms.

"And inasmuch as I erewhile pledged my word as a man to the illustrious and worshipful Mistress Margery, in her sisterly care, that I would write to her if we at any time needed the favor of her counsel and help, I would ere now have craved for the Magister's aid if the all-merciful Virgin had not succored us in due season.

"Nevertheless my heart was moved to write to you, gracious and worshipful Mistress Margery, inasmuch as I wist you would be in sorrow, and longing for tidings of my gracious master; for it is by this time long since I gave his last letter for the Schopperhof in charge to the German post-runner; and meseems that my gracious master has liked to give his precious time to study and to other pastimes rather than to those who, being his next of kin, are ever ready and willing to be patient with him; as indeed they could if they pleased enquire of my lord the knight Sebald Im Hoff as to his well-being. My gracious master gave him to know by long letters how matters were speeding with him, and of a certainty told him how that the old Marchese and his nephews, malicious knaves, came to blows with us at Padua by reason of the old Marchese's young and fair lady, who held my gracious master so dear that all Padua talked thereof.

"Nevertheless it was an evil business, inasmuch as three of them fell on us in the darkness of night; and if the merciful Saints had not protected us with their special grace nobler and more honorable blood should have been shed than those rogues'. Also we came to Paris in good heart; and safe and sound in body; and this is a city wherein life is far more ravishing than in Nuremberg.

"Whereas I have known full well that you, most illustrious Mistress Margery, have ever vouchsafed your gracious friendship to Mistress Ann Spiesz — and indeed I myself hold her in the highest respect, as a lady rich in all virtue — I would beseech her to put away from her heart all thought of my gracious master as soon as may be, and to strive no more to keep his troth, forasmuch as it can do no good: Better had she look for some other suitor who is more honest in his intent, that so she may not wholly waste her maiden days — which sweet Saint Katharine forbid! Yet, most worshipful Mistress Margery, I entreat you with due submission not to take this amiss in your beloved brother, nor to withdraw from him any share of your precious love, whereas my gracious master may rightly look higher for his future wife. And as touching his doings now in his unmarried state, of us the saying is true: Like master, like man. And whereas I, who am but a poor and simple serving man, have never been fain to set my heart on one only maid, no less is to be looked for in my gracious master, who is rich and of noble birth."

This epistle would of a certainty have moved me to laughter at any other time but, as things stood, the matter and manner of the low varlet's letter in daring to write thus of Ann, roused me to fury. And yet he was a brave fellow, and of rare faithfulness to his master; for when the Marchese's nephew had fallen upon Herdegen, he had wrenched the sword out of the young nobleman's hand at the peril of his own life and had thereafter modestly held his peace as to that brave deed. It was, in truth, hard not to betray the coming of this letter, even by a look; yet did I hide it; but when another letter was brought, not long after, all care and secrecy were vain.

Oh! that dreadful letter. I could not hide the matter of it; but I let pass her mother's wedding before I confessed to Ann what my brother had written to me.

That cruel letter lies before me now. It is longer than any he had written me heretofore, and I will here write it fair, for indeed I could not, an I would, copy the writing, so wild and reckless as it is.

"All must be at an end, Margery, betwixt Ann and me" — and those first words stung me like a whip-lash. "There. 'Tis written, and now you know it. I was never worthy of her, for I have sold my heart's love for money, as Judas sold the Lord.

"Not that my love or longing are dead. Even while I write I feel dragged to her; a thousand voices cry to me that there is but one Ann, and when a few weeks ago the young Sieur de Blonay made so bold as

to vaunt of his lady and her rose-red as above all other ladies and colors, my sword compelled him to yield the place of honor to blue — for whose sake you know well.

"And nevertheless I must give her up. Although I fled from temptation, it pursued me, and when it fell upon me, after a short battle I was brought low. The craving for those joys of the world which she tried to teach me to scorn, is strong within me. I was born to sin; and now as matters stand they must remain. A wight such as I am, who shoots through life like a wild hawk, cannot pause nor think until a shaft has broken his wings. The bitter fate which bids me part from Ann has stricken me thus, and now I can only look back and into my own soul; and the fairer, the sweeter, the loftier is she whom I have lost, the darker and more vile, meseemeth, is all I discover in myself.

"Yet, or ever I cast behind me all that was pure and noble, righteous and truly blissful, I hold up the mirror to my own sinful face, and will bring myself to show to you, my Margery, the hideous countenance I behold therein.

"I will not cloke nor spare myself in anything; and yet, at this hour, which finds me sober and at home, having quitted my fellows betimes this night, I verily believe that I might have done well, and not ill, and what was pleasing in the sight of God, and in yours, my Margery, and in the eyes of Ann and of all righteous folk, if only some other hand had had the steering of my life's bark.

"Margery, we are orphans; and there is nothing a man needs so much, in the years while he is still unripe and unsure of himself, as a master whom he must revere in fear or in love. And we — I — Margery, what was my grand-uncle to me?

"You and I again are of one blood and so near in age that, albeit one may counsel the other, it is scarce to be hoped that I should take your judgment, or you mine, without cavil.

"Then Cousin Maud! With all the mother's love she has ever shown us, all I did was right in her eyes; and herein doubtless lies the difference between a true mother, who brought us with travail into the world, and a loving foster-mother, who fears to turn our hearts from her by harshness; but the true mother punishes her children wherein she deems it good, inasmuch as she is sure of their love. My cousin's love was great indeed, but her strictness towards me was too small. Out of sheer love, when I went to the High School she kept my purse filled; then, as I grew older, our uncle did likewise, though for other reasons; and now that I have redenied Ann, to do his pleasure, I loathe myself. Nay, more and more since I am raised to such fortune as thousands may envy me; inasmuch as my grand-uncle purposes to make me his heir by form of law. Last night, when I came home with great gains from play in my pocket, I was nigh to put an end to the woes of this life. . . .

"But have no fear, Margery. A light heart soon will bring to the top again what ruth, at this hour, is

bearing to the deeps. Of what use is waiting? Am I then the first Junker who has made love to a sweet maid of low birth, only to forget her for a new lady love?

"Sooth to say, Margery, my confessor, to whom — albeit with bitter pains — I am laying open every fold of my heart — yes, Margery, if Ann's cradle had been graced with a coat of arms matters would be otherwise. But to call a copper-smith father-in-law, and little Henneleinlein Madame Aunt! In church, to nod from the old seats of the Schoppers to all those common folk as my nearest kin, to meet the lute-player among my own people, teaching the lads and maids their music, and to greet him as dear grandfather, to see my brethren and sisters-in-law busy in the clerks' chambers or work-shops — all this I say is bitter to the taste; and yet more when the tempter on the other side shows the gaudy young gentleman the very joys dearest to his courtly spirit. And with what eloquence and good cheer has Father Ignatius set all this before mine eyes here in Paris, doubtless with honest intent; and he spoke to my heart soberly and to edification, setting forth all that the precepts of the Lord, and my old and noble family required of me.

"Much less than all this would have overruled so feeble a wight as I am. I promised Father Ignatius to give up Ann, and, on my home-coming, to submit in all things to my uncle and to agree with him as to what each should yield up and renounce to the other — as though it were a matter of merchandise in spices

from the Levant, or silk kerchiefs from Florence; and thereupon the holy Friar gave me his benediction, as though my salvation were henceforth sure in this world and the next.

"I rode forth with him even to the gate, firm in the belief that I had thrown the winning number in life's game; but scarce had I turned my horse homeward when I wist that I had cast from me all the peace and joy of my soul.

"It is done. I have denied Ann — given her up forever — and whereas she must one day hear it, be it done at once. You, my poor Margery, I make my messenger. I have tried, in truth, to write to Ann, but it would not do. One thing you must say, and that is that, even when I have sinned most against her, I have never forgotten her; nay, that the memory of that happy time when she was fain to call herself my Laura moved me to ride forth to Treviso, where, in the chapel of the Franciscan Brethren, there may be seen a head of the true Laura done by the limner Simone di Martino, the friend of Petrarca, a right worthy work of art. Methought she drew me to her with voice and becks. And yet, and yet — woe, woe is me!

"My pen has had a long rest, for meseemed I saw first Petrarca's lady with her fair braids, and then Ann with her black hair, which shone with such lustrous, soft waves, and lay so nobly on the snow-white brow. Her eyes and mien are verily those of Laura; both alike pure and lofty. But here my full heart over-

flows; it cannot forget how far Ann exceeds Laura in sweet woman's grace.

"Day is breaking, and I can but sigh forth to the morning: 'Lost, lost! I have lost the fairest and the best!'

"Then I sat long, sunk in thought, looking out of window, across the bare tree-tops in the garden, at the grey mist which seems as though it ended only at the edge of the world. It drips from the leafless boughs, and mine eyes — I need not hide it — will not be kept dry. It is as though the leaves from the tree of my life had all dropped on the ground — nay, as though my own guilty hand had torn them from the stem."

"I have but now come home from a right merry company! It is of a truth a merciful fashion which turns night into day. Yes, Margery, for one whose first desire is to forget many matters, this Paris is a place of delight. I have drunk deep of the wine-cup, but I would call any man villain who should say that I am drunk. Can I not write as well as ever another — and this I know, that if I sold myself it was not cheap. It has cost me my love, and whereas it was great the void is great to fill. Wherefore I say: 'Bring hither all that giveth joy, wine and love-making, torches and the giddy dame in velvet and silk, dice and gaming, and mad rides, the fresh greenwood and bloody frays!' Is this nothing? Is it even a trivial thing?

"How, when all is said and done, shall we answer the question as to which is the better lot: heavenly

love, soaring on white swan's wings far above all that is common dust, as Ann was wont to sing of it, or earthly joys, bold and free, which we can know only with both feet on the clod?

"I have made choice and can never turn back. Long life to every pleasure, call it by what name you will! You have a gleeful, rich, and magnificent brother, little Margery; and albeit the simple lad of old, who chose to wife the daughter of a poor clerk, may have been dearer to you — as he was to my own heart — yet love him still! Of his love you are ever sure; remember him in your prayers; and as for that you have to say to Ann, say it in such wise that she shall not take it over much to heart. Show her how unworthy of her is this brother of yours, though in your secret soul you shall know that my guardian saint never had, nor ever shall have, any other face than hers.

"Now will I hasten to seal this letter and wake Eppelein that he may give it to the post-rider. I am weary of tearing up many sheets of paper, but if I were to read through in all soberness that I have written half drunk, this letter would of a certainty go the way of many others written by me to you, and to my beloved, faithful, only love, my lost Ann."

CHAPTER XIV.

MASTER PERNHART was wed on Tuesday after Palm Sunday. Ann was wont to come to our house early on Wednesday morning, and this was ever a happy meeting to which we gave the name of "the Italian spinning-hour," by reason that one of us would turn her wheel and draw out the yarn, while the other read aloud from the works of the great Italian poets.

Nor did Ann fail to come on this Wednesday after the wedding; but I had thrust Herdegen's letter into the bosom of my bodice and awaited her with a quaking heart.

Her spirit was heavy; I could see in her eyes that they had shed tears, and at my first question they filled again. Had she not seen her mother this morn beaming with happiness, and then remembered, with new pangs of heartache, the father she had lost scarce a year ago and whose image seemed to have faded out of the mind of the wife he had so truly loved.

When I said to her that I well understood her sorrow, but that I had other matter to lay before her which might bring her yet more cruel grief, she knew that it must be as touching Herdegen; and whereas before I spoke I could only clasp her to me and could

not bring out a single word, she thrust me from her and cried: "Herdegen? Speak! Some ill has come upon him! Margery — Merciful Virgin! How you are sobbing! — Dead — is he dead?"

As she said these words her cheeks turned pale and, when I shook my head, she seized my hand and asked sadly: "Worse? Then he has broken faith once more?"

Meseemed I could never speak again; and yet I might not keep silence, and the words broke from my bursting heart: "Ah, worse and far worse; more strange, more terrible! I have it here, in his hand. — Henceforth — my uncle, his rich inheritance .... All is over, Ann, betwixt him and you. And I — oh, that he should have left it to me to tell it!"

She stood in front of me as if rooted to the ground, and it was some time before she could find a word. Then she said in a dull voice: "Where is the letter?" I snatched it out of the bosom of my dress and was about to rend it as I went towards the hearth, but she stood in my way, snatched the letter violently from me, and cried: "Then if all is at an end, I will at any rate be clear about it. No false comfort, no cloaking of the truth!"

And she strove to wrench Herdegen's letter from me. But my strength was greater than hers, indeed full great for a maid; yet my heart told me that in her case my will would have been the same, so I made no more resistance but yielded up the letter. Then and there she read it; and although she was pale as death

and I marked how her lips trembled and every nerve in her body, her eyes were dry, and when she presently folded the letter and held it forth to me, she said with light scorn which cut me to the heart: "This then is what matters have come to! He has sold his love and his sweetheart! Only her face, it would seem, is not in the bargain by reason that he keeps that to rob his saint of her holiness! Well, he is free, and the wild joys of life in every form are to make up for love; and yet — and yet, Margery, pray that he may not end miserably!"

Gentle pity had sounded in these last words, and I took her hand and besought her right earnestly: "And you, Ann. Do you pray with me. But she shook her head and replied: Nay, Margery; all is at an end between him and me, even thoughts and yearning. I know him no more — and now let me go." With this she put on her little cloak, and was by the door already when Cousin Maud came in with some sweetmeats, as she was ever wont to do when we thus sat spinning; and as soon as she had set down that which she was carrying she opened her arms to the outcast maid, to clasp her to her bosom and comfort her with good words; but Ann only took her hand, pressed it to her lips, and vanished down the stairs.

At dinner that morning the dishes would have been carried out as full as they were brought in, if Master Peter had not done his best to hinder it; and as soon as the meal was over I could no longer bear myself in the house, but went off straight to the Pernharts'.

There the air seemed warmer and lighter, and Mistress Giovanna welcomed me to her new home right gladly; but she would not suffer me to go to Ann's chamber, forasmuch as that she had a terrible headache and had prayed to see no one, not even me. Yet I felt strongly drawn to her, and as the new-made wife knew that she and I were as one she did not forbid me from going upstairs, where Pernhart had made dead Gertrude's room all clean and fresh for Ann. Now whereas I knew that when her head ached every noise gave her pain, I mounted the steps with great care and opened the door softly without knocking. Also she was not aware of my coming. I would fain have crept away unseen; or even rather would have fallen on my knees by her side to crave her forgiveness for the bitter wrong my brother had done her. She was lying on the bed, her face hidden in the pillows, and her slender body shook as in an ague fit, while she sobbed low but right bitterly. Nor did she mark my presence there till I fell on my knees by the bed and cast my arms about her. Then she suddenly raised herself from the pillows, passed her hand across her wet eyes, and entreated me to leave her. Yet I did not as she bade me; and when she saw how deeply I took her griefs to heart, she rose from her couch, on which she had lain down with all her clothes on, and only prayed me that this should be the last time I would ever speak with her of Herdegen.

Then she led me to her table and showed me things which she had laid out thereon; poor little gifts

which my brother had brought her; every one, except only the Petrarca with the names in gold: Anna-Laura. And she desired that I would take them all and send them back to Herdegen at some fitting time.

As I nodded sadly enough, she must have seen in my face that I missed the little volumes and, ere I was aware, she had taken them out of her chest and thrown them in with the rest.

Then she cried in a changed voice:

"That likewise — Ah, no, not that! It is the best gift he ever made me, and he was so good and kind then — You do not know, you do not know! — How I long to keep the books! But away, away with them!"

Then she put everything into a silken kerchief, tied it up with hard knots, pushed the bundle into my hand, and besought me to go home.

I went home, sick at heart, with the bundle in my cold hand, and when the door was opened by Akusch, who, poor wight, bore our bitter winters but ill, I heard from above-stairs loud and right merry laughter and glee; and I knew it for the voice of Cousin Maud who seemed overpowered by sheer mirth. My wrath flared up, for our house this day was of a certainty the last where such merriment was fitting.

My cheeks were red from the snow-storm, yet rage made them even hotter as I hastened up-stairs. But before I could speak a single word Cousin Maud, with whom were the Magister and old Pirkheimer the mem-

ber of council, cried out as soon as she saw me: "Only imagine, Margery, what rare tidings his Excellency has brought us." And she went on to tell me, with great joy, while his worship added facts now and then, that the Magister had since yestereve become a rich man, inasmuch as his godmother, old Dame Oelhaf, had died, leaving him no small wealth.

This was verily marvellous and joyful hearing, for many had imagined the deceased to be a needy woman who had carried on the business left her by her husband, albeit she had no service but that of an ill-paid shop-lad, who was like one of the lean ears of Pharaoh's dream and moreover blind of one eye. Nevertheless I remembered well that her little shop, which was no greater than a fair-sized closet, had ever been filled with buyers when we had stolen in, against all commands, to buy a few dried figs. I can see the little crippled mistress now as she limped across the shop or along the street, and the boys would call after her: "Hip hop! Lame duck!" and all Nuremberg knew her better by the nickname of the Lame Duck than by her husband's.

That the poor little woman had departed this life we had all heard yestereve; but even the Magister had fully believed that her leavings would scarce be worth the pains of a walk to the town hall. But now the learned advocate told him that by her will, drawn up and attested according to law, she had devised to him all she had to leave as being the only child she had ever been thought worthy to hold at the font.

Then, due inquisition being made in her little place, a goodly number of worn stockings were found in the straw of her bed and other hiding places, and in them, instead of her lean little legs, many a gulden and Hungarian ducat of good gold. Moreover she had a house at Nordlingen and a mill at Schwabach, and thus the inheritance that had come to Magister Peter was altogether no small matter.

The simple man had never hoped for such fortune, and it was in truth laughable to see how he forgot his dignity, and leaped first on one foot and then the other, crying: "No, no! It cannot be true! Then poor Irus is become rich Crœsus!"

And thus he went on till he left us with Master Perkheimer. Then I laughed with my cousin; and when I was once more alone I marvelled at the mercy of a benevolent Providence, by whose ruling a small joy makes us to forget our heavy griefs, though it were but for a moment.

At night, to be sure, I could not help thinking with fresh sorrow of that which had come upon us; but then, on the morrow, I saw the Magister again, and would fain have rejoiced in his gladness; but lo, he was now silent and dull, and at the first opening he led me aside and said, right humbly and with downcast eyes: "Think no evil of me, Mistress Margery, in that yestereve my joy in earthly possessions was over much for my wits; believe me, it was not the glitter of mammon, but far other matters that turned my brain." And he confessed to me that he had ever borne Ann

in his heart, even when she was but a young maid at school, and had made the winning of her the goal of his life. To this end, and whereas without some means of living he could not hope, he had laid by every penny he had earned by teaching at our house and in the Latin classes, and had foregone the buying of many a fine and learned book, or even of a jar of wine to drink in the company of his fellows. Thus had he saved a goodly sum of money; nay, he had thought himself within reach of his high aim when he had discovered, that Christmas eve before Herdegen's departing, that the Junker had robbed him of his one ewe-lamb. There was nought left for him to do but to hold his peace, albeit in bitter sorrow, till within the last few days Heaven had showered its mercies on him. The powerful Junker — for so it was that he ever spoke and thought of my elder brother — had it seemed, released the lamb, and he himself was now in a state of life in which he might right well set up housekeeping. Then he went on to beseech me with all humbleness to speak a word for him to the lady of his choice, and I found it not in my heart to give the death-blow forthwith to his fond and faithful hopes, albeit I wist full surely that they were all in vain. Thus I bid him to have patience at least till Christmas, inasmuch as he should give Ann time to put away the memory of Herdegen; and he consented with simple kindness, although he had changed much and for the better in these late years, and could boast of good respect among the learned men of our city; and thus, albeit not a wealthy man,

and in spite of his mature years, he would be welcomed as a son-in-law by many a mother of daughters.

Thus the Magister, who had waited so long, held back even yet awhile. One week followed another, the third Sunday in Advent went by, and the holy tide was at hand when the delay should end which the patient suitor had allowed.

I had seen Ann less often than in past times. In the coppersmith's great household she commonly had her hands full, and I felt indeed that her face was changed towards me. A kind of fear, which I had not marked in her of old, had come over her of late; me-seemed she lived ever in dread of some new insult and hurt; also she had courteously but steadfastly refused to join in the festivities to which she was bidden by Elsa Ebner or others of the upper class, and even said nay to uncle Christian's bidding to a dance, to be given this very day, being his name-day, at his lodgings in the Castle. I likewise was bidden and had accepted my godfather's kindness; but my timid endeavor to move Ann to do his will, as her best and dearest old friend, brought forth the sorrowful answer that I myself must judge how little she was fit for any merry-makings of the kind. My friendship with her, which had once been my highest joy, had thus lost all its lightheartedness, albeit it had not lost all its joys, nor was she therefore the less dear to me though I dealt with her now as with a well-beloved child for whose hurt we are not wholly blameless.

Now it fell that on this day, the 20th December,

being my godfather's name-day, I found her not with the rest, but in her own chamber in violent distress. Her cheeks were on fire, and she was in such turmoil as though she had escaped some terrible persecution. Thereupon I questioned her in haste and fear, and she answered me with reserve, till, on a sudden, she cried: "It is killing me! I will bear it no more!" and hid her face in her hands. I clasped her in my arms, and to soothe her spoke in praise of her stepfather, Master Pernhart, and his high spirit and good heart; then she sobbed aloud and said: "Oh, for that matter! If that were all!"

And suddenly, or even I was aware, she had cast her arms about me and kissed my lips and cheeks with great warmth. Then she cried out: "Oh, Margery! You cannot turn from me! I indeed tried to turn from you; and I could have done it, even if it had cost me my heart's blood! But now and here I ask you: Is it just that I should lay myself on the rack because *he* has so cruelly hurt me? No, no. And I need your true soul to help me to shake off the burden which is crushing me to the earth and choking me. Help me to bear it, or I shall come to a bad end — I shall follow her who died here in this very chamber."

My soul had ever stood open to her and so I told her right heartily, and her face became once more as it had been of old; and albeit those things she had to tell me were not indeed comforting, still I could in all honesty bid her to be of good heart; and I presently felt that to unburden herself of all that had weighed

upon her these last few weeks, did her as much good as a bath. For it still was a pain to her to see her mother cooing like a pigeon round her new mate. She herself was full of his praises, albeit this man, well brought up and trained to good manners, would ever abide by the old customs of the old craftsmen, and his venerable mother likewise held fast by them, so that his wife had striven in vain to change the ways of the house. Thus master and mistress, son and daughter, foreman and apprentice, sewing man and maid all ate, as they had ever done, at the same table. And whereas the daughters, by old custom, sat in order on the mother's side, the youngest next to her and the oldest at the end, it thus fell that Ann was placed next to the foreman, who was that very one who had betrayed Götz Waldstromer to his master because he had himself cast an eye on Gertrude. The young fellow had ere long set his light heart on Ann; and being a fine lad, and the sole son of a well-to-do master in Augsburg, he was likewise a famous wooer and breaker of maiden hearts, and could boast of many a triumphant love affair among the daughters of the simpler class. He was, in his own rank of life, cock of the walk, as such folks say; and I remembered well having seen him at an apprentices' dance at the May merry-makings, whither he had come apparelled in a rose-colored jerkin and light-hued hose, bedecked with flowers and greenery in his cap and belt; he had fooled with the daughters of the master of his guild like the coxcomb he was, and whirled them off to dance as

though he did them high honor by paying court to them. It might, to be sure, have given him a lesson to find that his master's fair daughter scorned his suit; yet that sank not deep, inasmuch as it was for the sake of a Junker of high degree. With Ann he might hope for better luck; for although from the first she gave him to wit that he pleased her not, he did not therefore leave her in peace, and this very morning, finding her alone in the hall, he had made so bold as to put forth his hand to clasp her. Albeit she had forthwith set him in his place, and right sharply, it seemed that to protect herself against his advances there was no remedy but a complaint to his master, which would disturb the peace of the household. She was indeed able enough to take care of herself and to ward off any unseemly boldness on his part; but she felt her noble purity soiled by contact with that taint of commonness of which she was conscious in this young fellow's ways, and in many other daily experiences.

Every meal, with the great dish into which the apprentice dipped his spoon next to hers, was a misery to her; and when the master's old mother marked this, and noted also how uneasily she submitted to her new place and part in life, seeing likewise Ann's tear-stained eyes and sorrowful countenance, she conceived that all this was by reason that Ann's pride could hardly bend to endure life in a craftsman's dwelling. And her heart was turned from her son's step-daughter, whom at first she had welcomed right kindly; she overlooked her as a rule, or if she spoke to her, it was in harsh and

ungracious tones. This, as Ann saw its purpose, hurt her all the more, as she saw more clearly that the new grandmother was a warm-hearted and worthy and right-minded woman, from whose lips fell many a wise word, while she was as kind to the younger children as though they had been her own grandchildren. Nay, one had but to look at her to see that she was made of sound stuff, and had head and heart both in the right place.

A few hours since Ann had opened her heart to her Father confessor, the reverend prebendary von Hellfeld; and he had counselled her to take the veil and win heavenly bliss in a convent as the bride of Christ. And whereas all she craved was peace, and a refuge from the world wherein she had suffered so much, and Cousin Maud and I likewise deemed it the better course for her, she would gladly have followed this good counsel, but that her late dear father had ever been strongly averse to the life of the cloister. Self-seeking, he would say, is at the root of all evil, and he who becomes an alien from this world and its duties to seek happiness in a convent — inasmuch as that beatitude for which monks and nuns strive is nothing else than a higher form of happiness, extending beyond the grave to the very end of all things — may indeed intend to pursue the highest aim, and yet it is but self-seeking, although of the loftiest and noblest kind. Also, but a few days ere he died, he had admonished Ann, in whom he had long discerned the true teacher of his younger children, to warn them above all things against

self-seeking, inasmuch as now that the hand of death was already on him, he found his chiefest comfort in the assurance of having labored faithfully, trusting in his Redeemer's grace, to do all that in him lay for his own kith and kin, and for other folks' orphans, whether rich or poor.

This discourse had sunk deep into Ann's soul, and had been in her mind when she spoke such brave words to Herdegen, exhorting him to higher aims. Now, again, coming forth from the good priest's door, she had met her grand-uncle the organist, and asking him what he would say if a hapless and forlorn maid should seek the peace she had lost in the silence of the cloister, the simple man looked her full in the eyes and murmured sadly to himself: "Alack! And has it come to this!" Then he went close up to her, raised her drooping head, and cried in a cheering voice:

"In a cloister? You, in a cloister! You, our Ann, who have already learnt to be so good a mother in the Sisters's school? No child, and again and again I say No. Pay heed rather to the saying which your old grand-uncle once heard from the lips of a wise and good man, when in the sorest hour of his life he was about to knock at the gate of a Cistercian convent. — His words were: "Though thou lose all thou deemest thy happiness, if thou canst but make the happiness of others, thou shalt find it again in thine own heart."

And at a later day old Heyden himself told me that he, who while yet but a youth had been the *pre-*

fectus of the town-pipers, had been nigh to madness when his wife, his Elslein, had been snatched from him after scarce a year and a half of married life. After he had recovered his wits, he had conceived that any balance or peace of mind was only to be found in a convent, near to God; and it was at that time that the wise and excellent Ulman Stromer had spoken the words which had been thenceforth the light and guiding line of his life. He had remained in the world; but he had renounced the more honorable post of prefect of the town-musicians, and taken on him the humble one of organist, in which it had been granted to him to offer up his great gift of music as it were a sacrifice to Heaven. This maxim, which had spared the virtuous old man to the world, made its mark on Ann likewise; and whereas I saw how gladly she had received the doctrine that happiness should be found in making others happy, I prayed her to join me in taking it henceforth as the guiding lamp of our lives. At this she was well pleased; and she went on to point wherein and how we should henceforth strive to forget ourselves for our neighbor's sake, with that soaring flight of soul in which I could scarce follow her but as a child lags after a butterfly or a bird.

Then, when I presently saw that she was in better heart, I took courage, but in jest, being sure of her refusal, to plead the *Magister's* suit. This, however, was as I was departing; I had already stayed and delayed her over-long, inasmuch as I had yet to array myself for the feast at Uncle Christian's. But, as

I was about to speak, a serving man came in with a letter written by the kind old man to Ann herself, his "dear watchman" in which, for the third time, he besought her, with pressing warmth, not to refuse to go to him on his name day and pledge him in the loving cup to his health and happiness.

With the help of this tender appeal I made her say she would go; yet she spoke the words in haste and great agitation.

My uncle's messenger had hindered my suing, so, while we hastily looked through Ann's store of holiday raiment, I brought my pleading for Master Peter to an end; and what I looked for came, in truth, to pass: without seeming one whit surprised she steadfastly rejected his suit, saying that he was the poor, good, faithful *Magister*, and worthy to win a wife whose heart was all his own.

At my uncle's house that night, with the exception of certain learned and reverend gentlemen, Ann alone was not of gentle birth. Yet was she in no wise the least, neither in demeanor nor in attire; and when I beheld her in the ante-chamber, all lighted up with wax tapers, in her sky-blue gown, thanking the master of the house and his sister — who kept house for him — for their condescension, as she upraised her great eyes with loving respect, I could have clasped her in my arms in the face of all the world, and I marvelled how my brother Herdegen could have sinfully cast such a jewel from him.

Then, when we went on together into the guest-

chamber, it fell that the town-pipers at that minute ceased to play and there was silence on all, as though a flourish of trumpets had warned of the approach of a prince; and yet it was only in honor of Ann and her wondrous beauty. Each and all of the young men there would, meseemed, gladly have stepped into Herdegen's place, and she was so fully taken up with dancing that she could scarce mark how diligently all the mothers and maidens overlooked her. Howbeit, Ursula Tetzel was not content with that, but went up to her and with a sneer enquired whether Junker Schopper at Paris were well.

Ann drew herself up with pride and hastily answered that if any one craved news of him he had best apply to Mistress Ursula Tetzel, inasmuch as she was ever wont to have a keen eye on her dear cousin.

At this Ursula cried out: "How well our old schoolmate remembers the lessons she learnt; even the fable of the Fox and the Grapes!" then, turning to me she added: "Nor has she lost her skill in learning; she has not long been in her stepfather's dwelling and she has already mastered the art of hitting blows as the coppersmiths do." And she turned her back on us both.

And presently, when it came to her turn to join the chain in which Ann was taking part, I marked well that she urged the youth she danced with to stand away from the craftsman's daughter. Howbeit I at once brought her plot to naught and the young gentleman to shame. Not that she needed any such de-

fence, for her beauty led every man to seek her above all others. And when, at supper, Uncle Christian called her to his side and made it fully manifest to all present how dear she was to his faithful heart, I hoped that indeed the day was won for her, and that henceforth our friendship would be regarded as a matter apart from any concern with her step-father the coppersmith. What need she care about those discourteous women, who made it, to be sure, plain enough at their departing, that they took her presence there amiss.

On our way home methought she was in a meditative mood, and as we parted she bid me go to see her early next morning. This I should have done in any case, inasmuch as I knew no greater pleasure, after a feast or dance at which we had been together, than to talk with her of any matter we might each have marked, but there was something more than this in her mind.

Next day, indeed, when I had greeted her, she had lost her cheerful mien of the day before; it was plain to see that she had not slept, and I presently learned that she had been thinking through the night what her life must be, and how she could best fulfill the vow we had both made. The more diligently she had considered of the matter, the more worthy had she deemed our purpose; and the dance at my Uncle Christian's had clearly proven to her that among our class there were few to whom her presence could be welcome, and none to whom it could bring any real pleasure.

In this she was doubtless right; yet was I startled when, with the steadfast will which she ever showed, she said that, after duly weighing the matter, she had made up her mind to accept the *Magister*.

When she perceived how greatly I was amazed, she besought me, with the same eager haste as I had marvelled at the day before, that I would not contend against a conclusion she had fully weighed; inasmuch as that the Magister was a worthy man whom she could make truly happy. Moreover, his newly-acquired wealth would enable her to help many indigent persons in their need and misery. I enquired of her earnestly how about any love for him, and she broke out with much vehemence, saying that I must know for certain that for her all love and the joys of love were numbered with the dead. She would tell this to Master Peter with all honesty, and she was sure that he would be content with her friendship and warm goodwill.

But all this she poured out as though she could not endure to hear her own words. An inward voice at the same time warned me that she had made up her mind to this step, in order that Herdegen might fully understand that to him she was lost for ever, albeit I had not given up all hope that they might some day come together, and that Ann's noble love of what was best in my brother might thus rescue him from utter ruin. Hence her ill-starred resolve filled me with rage, to such a degree that I railed at it as a mad and sinful deed against her own peace of mind, and indeed

against him whom she had once held as dear as her own life.

But Ann cut me short, and bade me sharply to mind my promise, and never speak of Herdegen again.

My hot blood rose at this and I made for the door; nay, I had the handle of the latch in my hand when she flew after me, held me back by force, and entreated me with prayers that I would let her do her will, for that she had no choice. She purposed in solemn earnest henceforth at all times to devote herself to the happiness of others, and whereas that demanded heavy sacrifice, she was now ready to make it. If indeed I still refused to carry her answer to the *Magister*, then would she send it through her step-father or Dame Henneleinlein, who was apt at such errands, and bid her suitor come to see her.

Then I perceived that there was but small hope; with a heavy heart, and, indeed, a secret intent behind, I took the task upon me, for I saw plainly that my refusal would ruin all. All the same, meseemed it was a happy ordering that the Magister should have set forth early that morning to spend a few days at Nordlingen, to take possession of the house he had fallen heir to; for, when a great misfortune lies ahead, a hopeful soul clings to delay as the harbinger of deliverance.

I made my way home full of forebodings, and in front of our door I saw my Forest uncle's horses in waiting. He was above stairs with cousin Maud, and I soon was informed that he had come to bid me and

Ann to the great hunt which was to take place at the New Year. His Highness Duke Albrecht of Bavaria, with divers other knights and gentlemen, had promised to take part in it, and he needed our help for his sick and suffering wife; also, said he, he loved to see "a few smart young maids" at his board. Already he and cousin Maud had discussed at length whether it would be seemly to bring the coppersmith's step-daughter into the company of such illustrious guests; and the balance in her favor had been struck in his mind by his opinion that a fair young maid must ever be pleasing in the hunter's eyes out in the forest, whatever her rank might be.

He had now but one care, and that was that neither he nor any other man had hitherto dared to utter the name of Master Ulman Pernhart to my aunt Jacoba, and that she therefore knew not of his marriage with her dear Ann's mother. Yet must the lady be informed thereof; so, finding that my cousin Maud made no secret of her will to speed the Magister's wooing, while I weened, with good reason, that my aunt would gladly support me in hindering it, I then and there made up my mind to go back with my uncle, and hold council with his shrewd-witted wife.

CHAPTER XV.

We reached the forest lodge that evening with red faces and half-frozen hands and feet. The ride through the deep snow and the bitter December wind had been a hard one; but the woods in their glittering winter shroud, the sharp, refreshing breath of the pure air, and a thousand trifling matters — from the white hats that crowned every stock and stone to the tiny crystals of snow that fell on the green velvet of my fur-lined bodice — were a joy to me, albeit my heart was heavy with care. The evening star had risen or ever we reached the house; and out here, under God's open heavens, among the giants of the forest and its sturdy, weather-beaten folk, it scarce seemed that it could be true that I should see my bright, young Ann sharing the sorry life of the *Magister*, an alien from all this world's joys. Those who dwelt out here in these wilds must, methought, feel this as I felt it; and so in truth it proved. After I had taken my place at the hearth by my aunt's side, and she had mingled some spiced wine for us with her own feeble hands, she bid me speak. When she heard what it was that had brought me forth to the forest so late before Christmas, which we ever spent with our grand-uncle Im Hoff she at

first did but laugh at our *Magister's* suit; but as soon as I told her that it was Ann's earnest purpose to wed with him, she swore that she would never suffer such a deed of mad folly.

Master Peter had many times been her guest at the lodge; and she, though so small and feeble herself, loved to see tall and stalwart men, so that she had given him the name of "the little dry Bookworm," hardly accounting him a man at all. When she heard of his newly-gained wealth, she said: "If instead of being the richer by these thousands he could but be the same number of years younger, lift a hundredweight more, and see a hundred miles further out into the world, I would not mind his seeking his happiness with that lovely child!"

As for my uncle, he did but hum a burly bass to the tune of the "Little wee wife." But, being called away, he turned to me before closing the door behind him, and asked me very keenly, as though he had been restraining his impatience for some space: "And how about your brother? How is it that this matter has come about? Was not Herdegen pledged to marry Ann?"

Thereupon I told my aunt all I knew, and gave her Herdegen's letter to read, which I had taken care to bring with me; and even as she read it her countenance grew dark and fearful to look upon; she set her teeth like a raging hound, and hit her little hand on the table that stood by her couch so that the cups and phials standing thereon danced and clattered. Nay,

she forgot her weakness, and made as though she would spring up, but the pain was more than she could bear and she fell back on her pillows with a groan.

She had never loved my grand-uncle Im Hoff, and, as soon as she had recovered herself, she vowed she would bring his craft to nought and likewise would let her nephew, now in Paris, know her opinion of his knavish unfaith to a sacred pledge.

I then went on to tell her how hard and altogether insufferable Ann's life had become, and at length took courage to inform her who the man was whom she now called step-father. To this she at first said not a word, but cast down her eyes as though somewhat confused; but presently she asked wherefore and how it was that she had not heard of this marriage long since, and when I told her that folks for the most part had feared to speak the name of Master Ulman Pernhart in her presence, she again suddenly started up and cried in my face that in truth she forbade any mention of that villain and caitiff who had taken foul advantage of her son's youth and innocence to turn his heart from his parents and bring him to destruction.

And this led me, for the first time in my life, to break through the reverence I owed to the venerable lady, who so well deserved to be in all ways respected and spared; for I made so bold as to point out to her her cruel injustice, and to plead Master Ulman's cause with earnest zeal. For some time she was speechless with wrath and amazement, inasmuch as she was not

wont to be thus reproved; but then she paid me back in the like coin; one word struck forth the next, and my rising wrath hastened me on so that at last I told her plainly, that Master Pernhart had turned her son Götz out of doors to hinder him from a breach of that obedience he owed to his parents. Furthermore I informed her of all that the coppersmith's mother had told me of the attempt to carry away Gertrude, and what the end of that had been. Indeed, so soon as the foreman had betrayed the lovers' plot, Master Ulman had locked his daughter into her chamber; and when her lover, after waiting for her in vain at the altar with the hireling priest, came at last to seek her, her father told him that unless he — Götz — ceased his suit, he should exert his authority as her father to compel Gertrude to marry the foreman and go with him to Augsburg, or give her the choice of taking the veil. And this he confirmed by a solemn oath; and when Götz, like one in a frenzy, strove to make good his claim to see his sweetheart, and hear from her own lips whether she were minded to yield to her father's yoke, they came to blows, even on the stairs leading to Gertrude's chamber, and there was a fierce battle, which might have had a bloody end but that old dame Magdalen herself came between them to part them. And then Master Ulman had sworn to Götz that he would keep his daughter locked up as a captive unless the youth pledged himself to cease from seeing Gertrude till he had won his parents' consent. Thereupon Götz went forth into a strange land; but he did not forget

his well-beloved, and from time to time a letter would reach her assuring her of his faithfulness.

At the end of three years after his departing he at last wrote to the coppersmith that he had found a post which would allow of his marrying and setting up house and he straightly besought Master Ulman no longer to keep apart two who could never be sundered. Nor did Pernhart delay to answer him, hard as he found it to use the pen, inasmuch as there was no more to say than that Gertrude was sleeping under the sod with her lover's ring on her finger and the last violets he had ever given her under her head, as she had desired.

Thus ended the tale of poor Gertrude; but before I had half told it my wrath had cooled. For my aunt sat in silence, listening to me with devout attention. Nor were my eyes dry, nor even those of that strong-willed dame, and when, at the end, I said: "Well, Aunt?" she woke, as it were, from a dream, and cried out: "And yet those craftsmen folk robbed me of my son, my only child!"

And she sobbed aloud and hid her face in her hands, while I knelt by her side, and threw my arms about her, and kissed her thin fingers which covered her eyes, and said softly, as if by inspiration: "But the craftsman loved his child; yea, and she was a sweet and lovely maid, the fairest in all the town, and her father's pride. And what was it that snatched her so early away but that she pined for your son? Götz may soon be recalled to his mother's arms; but the

coppersmith may never see his child — fair Gertrude, the folks called her — never see her more. And he might have been rejoiced in her presence to this day if. . . ."

She broke in with words and gestures of warning, and when I nevertheless would not cease from entreating her no longer to harden her heart, but to bid her son come home to her, who was her most precious treasure, she commanded me to quit her chamber. Such a command I must obey, whether I would or no; nay, while I stood a moment at the door she signed to me to go; but, as I turned away, she cried after me: "Go and leave me, Margery. But you are a good child, I will tell you that!"

At supper, which I alone shared with my uncle and the chaplain, I told my uncle that I had spoken to his wife of Master Pernhart, and when he heard that I had even spoken a good word for him, he looked at me as though I had done a right bold deed; yet I could see that he was highly pleased thereat, and the priest, who had sat silent — as he ever did, gave me a glance of heartfelt thanks and added a few words of praise. It was long after supper, and my uncle had had his night-draught of wine when my aunt sent the house-keeper to fetch me to her. Kindly and sweetly, as though she set down my past wrath to a good intent, she bid me sit down by her and then desired that I would repeat to her once more, in every detail, all I could tell her as touching Götz and Gertrude. While I did her bidding to the best of my powers she spoke never a word; but

when I ended she raised her head and said, as it were in a dream: "But Götz! Did he not forsake father and mother to follow after a fair face?"

Then again I prayed her right earnestly to yield to the emotions of her mother's heart. But seeing her fixed gaze into the empty air, and the set pout of her nether lip, I could not doubt that she would never speak the word that would bid him home.

I felt a chill down my back, and was about to rise and leave, but she held me back and once more spoke of Herdegen and that matter. When she had heard all the tale, she looked troubled: "I know my Ann," quoth she. "When she has once given her promise to the Bookworm all the twelve Apostles would not make her break it, and then she will be doomed to misery, and her fate and your brother's are both sealed."

She then went on to ask when the *Magister* was to return home, and as I told her he was expected on the morrow great trouble came upon her.

It was past midnight or ever I left her, and as it fell I slept but ill and late, insomuch that I was compelled to make good haste, and as it fell that I went to the window I saw the snow whirling in the wind, and behold, in the shed, a great wood-sleigh was being made ready, doubtless for some sick man to be carried to the convent.

I found my aunt in the hall, whither she scarce ever was carried down before noon-day; and instead of her every-day garb — a loose morning-gown — she was apparelled in strange and shapeless raiment, so

muffled in kerchiefs and cloaks as to seem no whit like any living woman, much less herself, insomuch that her small thin person was like nothing else than a huge, shapeless, many-coated onion. Her little face peeped out of the veils and kerchiefs that wrapped her head, like a half-moon out of thick clouds; but her bright eyes shone kindly on me as she cried: "Come, haste to your breakfast, lie-a-bed! I thought to find you fitted and ready, and you are keeping the men waiting as though it were an every-day matter that we should travel together."

"Aye, aye! She is bent on the journey," my uncle said with a groan, as he cast a loving glance at his frail wife and raised his folded hands to Heaven. "Well, chaplain, miracles happen even in our days!" And his Reverence, silent as he was, this time had an answer ready, saying with hearty feeling: "The loving heart of a brave woman has at all times been able to work miracles."

"Amen," said my uncle, pressing his lips on the top of his wife's muffled head.

Howbeit I remembered our talk yesternight, and the sleigh I had seen being harnessed; indeed, the look alone which the unwonted traveller cast on me was enough to tell me what my sickly aunt purposed to do for the sake of Ann. Then something came upon me, I know not what; with a passion all unlike that of yesterdayeve, I fell on my knees and kissed her as a child whose mother has made it a Christmas gift of what it most loves and wishes to have, while my lips

were pressed to her eyes, brow, and cheeks, wherever the wrappings covered them not, and she cried out:

"Leave me, leave me, crazy child! You are choking me. What great matter is it after all? One woman will ride through the snow to Nuremberg for the sake of a chat with another, and who turns his head to look at her? Now, foolish wench, let me be. What a to-do for nothing at all!"

How I ate my porridge in the winking of an eye, and then sprang into the sleigh, I scarce could tell, and in truth I marked little of our departing; mine eyes were over full of tears. Packed right close to my aunt, whereas she filled three-fourths of the seat, I flew with her over the snow; nor did we need any great following on horseback to bear us company, inasmuch as my uncle rode on in front, and the Buchenauers and Steinbachers and other highway robbers who made the roads unsafe about Nuremberg, all lived in peace with uncle Waldstromer for the sake of the shooting.

When we got into the town, and I bid the rider take us to the Schopperhof, my aunt said: "No, to Ulman Pernhart's house, the coppersmith."

At this the faithful old serving-man, who had heard many rumors of his banished young master's dealings with the craftsman's fair daughter, and who was devoted to Götz, muttered the name of his protecting saint and looked about him as though some giant cutthroat were ready to rush out of the brush wood and fall upon the sleigh; nor, indeed, could I altogether

refrain my wonder. Howbeit, I recovered myself at once, and pointed out to her that it scarce beseemed her to enter a stranger's house for the first time in such attire. Moreover, Akusch had been sent in front to announce her coming to cousin Maud. I could send for Ann; as, indeed, it beseemed her, the younger, to wait upon my aunt.

But she held to her will to go to Master Ulman's dwelling; yet, whereas the kerchiefs and wraps were a discomfort to her, she agreed to lay them aside at our house first.

Cousin Maud pressed her almost by force to take rest and meat and drink; but she refused everything; though all was in readiness and steaming hot; till, as fate would have it, as she was being carried down and out again, the *Magister* came in from his journey to Nordlingen. In his high fur boots and the heavy wrapping he had cast about his head to screen him from the wintry blast, he had not to be sure, the appearance of a suitor for a fair young maiden; and the glance cast at him by my aunt, half in mockery and half in wrath, eyeing him from head to foot, would have said plainly enough to other men than Master Peter — who, for his part made her a right humble and well-turned speech — "Wait awhile, young fellow! I am here now! And if you find a flea in your ear, you have me to thank for it!"

Apparelled now as befitted a lady of her degree, in a furred cloak and hood, she was borne off in Cousin Maud's well-curtained litter. I had sent Akusch to

Ann with a note, but he had not found her within, and awaited me in the street; thus it fell that no one at the Pernharts was aware of what was coming upon them.

When presently the bearers set down the litter, Aunt Jacoba looked at the fine house before which we stood, and enquired what this might mean, whereas it was seven years since she had been in the city, and the master's new dwelling was not at that time built. Also she was greatly amazed to find a craftsman in so great a house. But better things were to come: as I was about to knock at the door it opened, and five gentlemen of the Council, all men of the first rank among the Elders of the city, appeared on the threshold, and Master Pernhart in their midst. They shook hands with him as with one of themselves, and he towered above them all; nay, if he had not stood there as he had come from the forge, in his leathern apron, with his smith's cap in his hand, any one might have conceived him to be the chief of them all.

Now these gentlemen had come to Master Pernhart to announce to him that he had been chosen one of the eight wardens of the guilds who at that time formed part of the worshipful town council of forty-two. Veit Gundling, the old master-brewer, had lately departed this life, and the electors had been of one mind in choosing the coppersmith to fill his place, and he was likewise approved by the guilds. They had come to him forthwith, albeit their choice would not be declared till Saint Walpurgis day, inasmuch as it was

deemed well to have the matter settled before the close of the old year.

Thus it came to pass that my aunt was witness while they took leave, and he returned thanks in a few heartfelt words. These, to be sure, were cut short by her coming, by reason that she was well-known to these five noble gentlemen, who all, as in duty bound, assured her of their surprise and pleasure in greeting her once more, here in the town.

That the feeble and suffering lady had come to Pernhart's dwelling not merely to order a copper-lid or a preserving pan was easy to be understood, but she cut short all inquisition, and the litter was forthwith carried in through the widely-opened door.

The master received her in the hall.

He had till now never seen her but from a distance, yet had he heard enough about her to form a clear image of her. With her it was the same. She saw this man, to whom she owed such bitter grudge, for the first time here, under his own roof, and it was right strange to behold the two eyeing each other so keenly; he with a slight bow, almost timidly, and cap in hand; she unabashed, but with an expression as though she well knew that nothing pleasant lay before her.

The master spoke first, bidding her welcome to his dwelling, in accents of truth but with all due respect, and never speaking of it, as is the wont of his class, as "humble" or "poor," and as he was about to help her out of the litter I could see her face brighten, and this assured me that she would let bygones be bygones, as

they say, and declare to Master Pernhart in plain words to what intent and purpose she had knocked at his door. By the time she was in the best chamber, the last sour curl had disappeared from her mouth; and indeed all was snug and seemly therein; Dame Giovanna being well-skilled in giving things a neat appearance, well pleasing to the eye.

Pernhart meanwhile had said but little, and his face was still dark, almost solemn of aspect. The master's mother again, to whom Gertrude had been all-in-all, and who had done what she could to speed her marriage, could read the other woman's heart, and understood how great had been the sacrifice she had taken upon herself. There was no trace of the old grudge in her speech, and it sounded not ill when, as she put my aunt's cushions straight, she said she could not envy her, forasmuch as she the elder was thus permitted to be of service to the younger. When Pernhart presently quitted the chamber, perchance to don more seemly attire the two old women sat in eager talk; and if the lady were thin and sickly and the craftsman's mother stout and sturdy, yet were there many points of resemblance between them. Both, for certain, loved to rule, and as I watched them, seeing each shoot out her nether lip if the other spoke a word to cross her, I found it right good sport; but at the same time I was amazed to hear how truly old Dame Pernhart understood and spoke of Ann. I had indeed hitherto seen many a thing in my friend with other eyes, and yet I could not accuse the good woman of injustice, or deny that the

coppersmith's step-daughter, from knowing me and from keeping company with us, had grown up with manners and desires unlike those of ever another clerk's or even a craftsman's daughter.

Albeit she strove to hide her deep discomfort, the old woman said, she could by no means succeed. A household was a body, and any member of it who could not be content with its ways was ill at ease with the rest, and made it hard for them to do it such service and pleasure as they would fain do. Ann fulfilled her every duty, down to the very least of them, by reason that she had a steadfast spirit and great dominion over herself; but she got small thanks, and by her own fault, inasmuch as she did it joylessly. To look for bright cheer from her was to seek grapes on a birch-tree; and whereas the grandmother had till lately hoped to find in this gentle maid one who might fill the place of her who was no more, she could now only wish that she might find some other home.

To all this my aunt agreed, and presently, when Pernhart came in, clad in his holiday garb — a goodly man and well fitted for his new dignity, Aunt Jacoba bid me go look out for Ann. I saw that she desired my absence that she might deal alone with the mother and son, so I hastily departed and stayed in the upper chambers with the children till I caught sight of Ann and her mother coming towards the house. I ran down to meet them and behold! as we all three went into the guest chamber, Pernhart was in the act of bending over my aunt's hand to press it to his lips, and

tears were sparkling in his eyes as well as in those of the women; nay, they were so greatly moved that no one heard the door open, and the old woman believed herself to be alone with her son as she cried to my aunt: "Oh wherefor did not Heaven vouchsafe to guide you to us some years since!"

My aunt only nodded her head in silence, and Dame Magdalen doubtless took this for assent; but I read more than this in her face, and something as follows: "We have hurt each other deeply, and I am thankful that all is past and forgiven; yet, much as I may now esteem you, in the matter you had so set your heart on I would no more have yielded to-day than I did at that time."

CHAPTER XVI.

ANN looked right sweetly as she told my aunt that she felt put to shame by the great loving-kindness which had brought the feeble lady out through the forest in the bitter winter weather for her sake, and she kissed the thin, small hand with deep feeling; and even the elder woman unbent and freely gave vent before her favorite to the full warmth of her heart, which she was not wont to display. She had told the Pernharts what were the fears which had brought her into the town, so the chamber was presently cleared, and the master called away Mistress Giovanna after that my aunt had expressed her admiration of her rare charms.

As I too was now preparing to retire, which methought but seemly Aunt Jacoba beckoned me to stay. Ann likewise understood what had brought her sickly friend to her, and she whispered to me that albeit she was deeply thankful for the abundant goodness my aunt had ever shown her, yet could she never swerve from her well-considered purpose. To this I was only able to reply that on one point at least she must change her mind, for that I knew for certain that old grand-dame Pernhart loved her truly. At this she

cried out gladly and thankfully: "Oh, Margery! if only that were true!"

So soon as we three were left together, my aunt went to the heart of the matter at once, saying frankly to what end she had come hither, that she knew all that Ann had suffered through Herdegen, and how well she had taken it, and that she had now set her mind on wedding with the *Magister*.

And whereas Ann here broke in with a resolute: "And that I will!" my aunt put it to her that she must be off with one or ever she took on the other lover. Herdegen had come before Master Peter, and the first question therefor was as to how matters stood with him.

At this Ann humbly besought her to ask nothing concerning him; if my aunt loved her she would forbear from touching on the scarce-healed wound. So much as this she said, though with pain and grief; but her friend was not to be moved, but cried: "And do I not thank Master Ulsenius when he thrusts his probe to the heart of my evil, when he cuts or burns it? Have you not gladly approved his saying that the leech should never despair so long as the sick man's heart still throbs? Well then, your trouble with Herdegen is sick and sore and lies right deep. . . ."

But Ann broke in again, crying: "No, no, noble lady, the heart of that matter has ceased to beat. It is dead and gone for ever!"

"Is it so?" said my aunt coolly. "Still, look it close in the face. Old Im Hoff — I have read the let-

ter — commands your lover to give you up and do his bidding. Yet, child, does he take good care not to write this to you. Finding it over hard to say it himself, he leaves the task to Margery. And as for that letter; a Lenten jest I called it yestereve; and so it is verily! Read it once more. Why, it is as dripping with love as a garment drips when it is fished out of a pool! While he is trying to shut the door on you he clasps you to his heart. Peradventure his love never glowed so hotly, and he was never so strongly drawn to you as when he wrote this paltry stuff to burst the sacred bands which bind you together. Are you so dull as not to feel this?"

"Nay, I see it right well," cried Ann eagerly, "I knew it when I first read the letter. But that is the very point! Must not a lover who can barter away his love for filthy lucre be base indeed? If when he ceased to be true he had likewise ceased to love, if the fickle Fortunatus had wearied of his sweetheart — then I could far more easily forgive."

"And do you tell me that your heart ever throbbed with true love for him?" asked her friend in amazement, and looking keenly into her eyes as though she expected her to say No. And when Ann cried "How can you even ask such a question?" My aunt went on "Then you did love him? And Margery tells me that you and she have made some strange compact to make other folks happy. Two young maids who dare to think they can play at being God Almighty! And the *Magister*, I conceive, was to be the first to whom

you proposed to be a willing sacrifice, let it cost you what it may? That is how matters stand?"

Ann was not now so ready to nod assent, and my aunt murmured something I could not hear, as she was wont to do when something rubbed her against the grain; then she said with emphasis: "But child, my poor child, love, and wounded pride, and heart-ache have turned your heart and good sense. I am an old woman, and I thank God can see more clearly. It is real, true love, pleasing to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, aye and to the merciful Virgin and all the saints who protect you, which has bound you and Herdegen together from your infancy. He, though faithless and a sinner, still bears his love in his heart and you have not been able to root yours up and cast it out. He has done his worst, and in doing it — remember his letter — in doing it, I say, has poisoned his own young life already. In that Babel called Paris he does but reel from one pleasure to another. But how long can that last? Do you not see, as I see, that the day must come when, sickened and loathing all this folly he will deem himself the most wretched soul on earth, and look about him for the firm shore as a sailor does who is tossed about in a leaking ship at sea? Then will he call to mind the past, his childhood and youth, his pure love and yours. Then you yourself, you, Ann, will be the island haven for which he will long. Then — aye, child, it is so, you will be the only creature that may help him; and if you really crave to create happiness — if your love is as true as — not so long ago — you de-

clared it to be, on your knees before me and with scalding tears, he, and not Master Peter must be the first on whom you should carry out your day-dreams—for I know not what other name to give to such vain imaginings."

At this Ann sobbed aloud and wrung her hands, crying: "But he cast me off, sold me for gold and silver. Can I, whom he has flung into the dust, seek to go after him? Would it beseem an honest and shamefaced maid if I called him back to me? He is happy — and he will still be happy for many long, long years amid his reckless companions; if the time should ever come of which you speak, most worshipful lady, even then he will care no more for Ann, bloomless and faded, than for the threadbare bravery in which he once arrayed himself. As for me and my love, warmly as it will ever glow in my breast, so long as I live and breathe, he will never need it in the life of pleasure in which he suns himself. It is no vain imagining that I have made my goal, and if I am to bring joy to the wretched I must seek others than he."

"Right well," said my aunt, "if so be that your love is no worthier nor better than his."

And from the unhappy maid's bosom the words were gasped out: "It is verily and indeed true and worthy and deep; never was truer love . . . ."

"Never?" replied my aunt, looking at her enquiringly. "Have you not read of the love of which the Scripture speaketh? Love which is able and ready to endure all things."

And the words of the Apostle came into my mind which the Carthusian sister had graven on our memories, burning them in, as it were, as being those which above all others should live in every Christian woman's heart; and whereas I had hitherto held back as beseemed me, I now came forward and said them with all the devout fervor of my young heart, as follows: "Charity suffereth long and is kind; Charity envieth not; Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

While I spoke Ann, panting for breath, fixed her eyes on the ground, but my aunt rehearsed the words after me in a clear voice "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth and endureth all things." And she added right earnestly; "Therefore do thou believe and hope and endure yet longer, my poor child, and tell me in all truth: Does it seem to you a lesser deed to lead back the sinner into the way of righteousness and bliss in this world and the next, than to give alms to the beggar?"

Ann shook her head, and my aunt went on: "And if there is any one — let me repeat it — who by faithful love may ever rescue Herdegen, albeit he is half lost, it is you. Come, come," and she signed to her, and Ann did her bidding and fell on her knees by her, as she had done erewhile in the forest-lodge. The elder lady kissed her hair and eyes, and said further: "Cling fast to your love, my darling. You have nothing else than

love, and without it life is shallow indeed, is sheer emptiness. You will never find it in the *Magister's* arms, and that your heart is of a certainty not set on marrying a well-to-do man at any cost . . . ."

But she did not end her speech, inasmuch as Ann imploringly raised her great eyes in mild reproach, as though to defend herself from some hurt. So my aunt comforted her with a few kind words, and then went on to admonish her as follows: "Verily it is not love you lack, but patient trust. I have heard from Margery here what bitter disappointments you have suffered. And it is hard indeed to the stricken heart to look for a new spring for the withered harvest of joy. But look you at my good husband. He ceases not from sowing acorns, albeit he knows that it will never be vouchsafed to him to see them grown to fine trees, or to earn any profit from them. Do you likewise learn to possess your soul in patience; and do not forget that, if Herdegen is lost, the question will be put to you: "Did you hold out a hand to him while it was yet time to save him, or did you withdraw from him your love and favor in faint-hearted impatience at the very first blow?"

The last words fell in solemn earnest from my aunt's lips, and struck Ann to the heart; she confessed that she had many times said the same things to herself, but then maiden pride had swelled up in her and had forbidden her to lend an ear to the warning voice; and nevertheless none had spoken so often or so loudly in her soul, so that her heart's deepest yearning responded to what her friend had said.

"Then do its bidding," said my aunt eagerly, and I said the same; and Ann, being not merely overruled but likewise convinced, yielded and confessed that, even as Master Peter's wife, she could never have slain the old love, and declared herself ready to renounce her pride and wrath.

Thus had my aunt's faithful love preserved her from sin, and gladly did I consent to her brave spirit when she said to Ann: "You must save yourself for that skittle-witted wight in Paris, child; for none other than he can make you rightly happy, nor can he be happy with any other woman than my true and faithful darling!"

Ann covered my aunt's hands with kisses, and the words flowed heartily and gladly from her lips as she cried: "Yes, yes, yes! It is so! And if he beat me and scorned me, if he fell so deep that no man would leap in after him, I, I, would never let him sink."

And then Ann threw herself on my neck and said: "Oh, how light is my heart once more. Ah, Margery! now, when I long to pray, I know well enough what for."

My aunt's dim eyes had rarely shone so brightly as at this hour, and her voice sounded clearer and firmer than it was wont when she once more addressed us and said: "And now the old woman will finish up by telling you a little tale for your guidance. You knew Riklein, the spinster, whom folks called the night-spinster; and was not she a right loving and cheerful soul? Yet had she known no small meed of sorrows.

She died but lately on Saint Damasius' day last past, and the tale I have to tell concerns her. They called her the night-spinster, by reason that she ofttimes would sit at her wheel till late into the night to earn money which she was paid at the rate of three farthings the spool. But it was not out of greed that the old body was so keen to get money.

"In her youth she had been one of the neatest maids far and wide, and had set her heart on a charcoal burner who was a sorry knave indeed, a sheep-stealer and a rogue, who came to a bad end on the rack. But for all that Riklein never ceased to love him truly and, albeit he was dead and gone, she did not give over toiling diligently while she lived yet for him. The priest had told her that, inasmuch as her lover had taken the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on the scaffold, the Kingdom of Heaven was not closed to him, yet would it need many a prayer and many a mass to deliver him from the fires of purgatory. So Riklein, span and span, day and night, and stored up all she earned, and when she lay on her death-bed, not long ago, and the priest gave her the Holy Sacrament, she took out her hoard from beneath her mattress and showed it to him, asking whether that might be enough to pay to open the way for Andres to the joys of Heaven? And when the chaplain said that it would be, she turned away her face and fell asleep. So do you spin your yarn, child, and let the flax on your distaff be glad assurance; and, if ever your heart sinks within you, remember old Riklein!"

"And the Farmer's daughter in 'Poor Heinrich,'" I said, "who gladly gave her young blood to save her plighted lord from leprosy."

Thus had my aunt gained her end; but when she strove to carry Ann away from her home and kindred, and keep her in the forest as her own child — to which Master Pernhart and his mother gave their consent — she failed in the attempt. Ann was steadfast in her desire to remain with her mother and the children, and more especially with her deaf and dumb brother, Mario. If my aunt should at any time need her she had but to command her, and she would gladly go to her, this very day if she desired it; howbeit duly to work out her spinning — and by this she meant that she bore Riklein in mind — she must ever do her part for her own folk, with a clear conscience.

Thus it was fixed that Ann should go to the Forest lodge to stay till Christmas and the New Year were past, only she craved a few hours delay that she might remove all doubt from the *Magister's* mind. I offered to take upon myself this painful task; but she altogether rejected this, and how rightly she judged was presently proved by her cast-off suitor's demeanor; inasmuch as he was ever after her faithful servant and called her his gracious work-fellow. When she had told him of her decision he swore, well-nigh with violence, to become a monk, and to make over his inheritance to a convent, but Ann, with much eloquence, besought him to do no such thing, and laid before him the grace of living to make others happy; she won him over to

join our little league and whereas he confessed that he was in no wise fit for the life, she promised that she would seek out the poor and needy and claim the aid only of his learning and his purse. And some time after she made him a gift of an alms-bag on which she had wrought the words, "Ann, to her worthy work-fellow."

Here I am bound to tell that, not to my aunt alone, but to me likewise did the good work which the old organist had pointed out to my friend, seem a vain imagining when it had led her to accept a lover whom she loved not. But when it became a part of her life, stripped of all bigotry or overmuch zeal, and when the old musician had led us to know many poor folks, it worked right well and we were able to help many an one, not alone with money and food, but likewise with good counsel and nursing in sore need. Whenever we might apply to the Magister, his door and purse alike were open to us, and peradventure he went more often to visit and succor the needy than he might otherwise have done, inasmuch as he thereby found the chance of speech with his gracious "work-fellow," of winning her praises and kissing her hand, which Ann was ever fain to grant when he had shown special zeal.

We were doubtless a strange fellowship of four: Ann and I, the organist and Master Peter, and, albeit we were not much experienced in the ways of the world, I dare boldly say that we did more good and dried more tears than many a wealthy Abbey.

At the New Year I followed Ann to the forest, and helped to grace the hunter's board "with smart

wenches;" and when she and I came home together after Twelfth day, she found that the forward apprentice had quitted her step-father's house. Not only had my aunt told old Dame Magdalen of his ill-behaving, but his father at Augsburg was dead, and so Pernhart could send him home to the dwelling he had inherited without disgracing him. Yet, after this, he made so bold as to sue for Ann in a right fairly written letter, to which she said him nay in a reply no less fairly written.

CHAPTER XVII.

A THOUGHTFUL brain could never cease to marvel at the wonders which happen at every step and turn, were it not that due reflection proves that strange events are no less necessary and frequent links in the mingled chain of our life's experience than common-place and every-day things; wherefor sheer wonder at matters new to our experience we leave for the most part to children and fools. And nevertheless the question many a time arose in my mind: how a woman whose heart was so truly in the right place as my aunt's could cast off her only son for the cause of an ill-match, and notwithstanding strive with might and main to remove all hindrances in the way of another such ill-match.

This indeed brought to my mind other, no less miracles. Thus, after Ann's home-coming, when I would go to see her at Pernhart's house, I often found her sitting with the old dame, who would tell her many things, and those right secret matters. Once, when I found Ann with the old woman from whom she had formerly been so alien, they were sitting together in the window-bay with their arms about each other, and looking in each other's face with loving but tearful eyes. My entrance disturbed them; Dame Magdalen

had been telling her new favorite many matters concerning her son's youthful days, and it was plain to see that she rejoiced in these memories of the best days of her life, when her two fine lads had ever been at the head of their school. Her eldest, indeed, had done so well that the Lord Bishop of Bamberg, in his own person, had pressingly desired her late departed husband to make him a priest. Then the father had apprenticed Ulman to himself, and dedicated the elder, who else should have inherited the dwelling-house and smithy, to the service of the Church, whereupon he had ere long risen to great dignity.

None, to be sure, listened so well as Ann, open-eared to all these tales, and it did old Dame Magdalen good to see the maid bestir herself contentedly about the house-keeping; but her changed mind proceeded from yet another cause. My aunt had done a noble deed of pure human kindness, of real and true Christian charity, and the bright beam of that love which could drag her feeble body out into the winter's cold and to her foe's dwelling, cast its light on both these miracles at once. This it was which had led the high-born dame to cast aside all the vanities and foolishness in which she had grown up, to the end that she might protect a young and oppressed creature whom she truly cared for from an ill-fate. Yea, and that sunbeam had cast its light far and wide in the coppersmith's home, and illumined Ann likewise, so that she now saw the old mother of the household in a new light.

When the very noblest and most worshipful deems it worthy to make a great sacrifice out of pure love for a fellow-creature, that one is, as it were, ennobled by it; it opens ways which before were closed; and such a way was that to old Dame Magdalen's heart, who now, on a sudden, bethought her that she found in Ann all she had lost in her well-beloved grandchild Gertrude.

Never had Ann and I been closer friends than we were that winter, and to many matters which bound us, another was now added — a sweet secret, concerning me this time, which, strange to tell, drew us even more near together.

The weeks before Lent presently came upon us; Ann, however, would take part in no pleasures, albeit she was now a welcome guest, since her step-father was a member of the worshipful council. Only once did she yield to my beseeching and go with me to a dance at a noble house; but whereas I perceived that it disturbed her cheerful peace of mind, although she was treated with hearty respect, I troubled her no more, and for her sake withdrew myself in some measure from such merry-makings.

After Easter, when the spring-tide was already blossoming, my soul likewise went forth to seek joy and gladness, and now will I tell of the new marvel which found fulfilment in my heart.

A grand dance was to be given in honor of certain ambassadors from the Emperor Sigismund, who had come to treat with his Highness the Elector and the

Town Council as to the Assembly of the States to be held in the summer at Ratisbon, at the desire of Theodoric, Archbishop of Cologne. The illustrious chief of this Embassy, Duke Rumpold of Glogau in Silesia, had been received as guest in a house whither, that very spring, the eldest son had come home from Padua and Paris, where he had taken the dignity of Doctor of Ecclesiastical and Civil Laws with great honors, and he it was who first moved my young heart to true love.

As a child I had paid small heed to Hans Haller, as a lad so much older that he overlooked little Margery, and by no means took her fancy like Cousin Götz; thus he came upon me as one new and strange.

He had dwelt five years in other lands and the first time ever I looked into his truthful eyes methought that the maid he should choose to wife was born in a lucky hour.

But every mother and daughter of patrician rank doubtless thought the same; and that he should ever uplift me, giddy, hasty Margery, to his side, was more than I dared look for. Yet, covertly, I could not but hope; inasmuch as at our first meeting again he had seemed well-pleased and amazed at my being so well-favored, and a few days later, when many young folks were gathered together at the Hallers' house, he spoke a great while and right kindly with me in especial. Nor was it as though I were some unripe child, such as these young gentlemen are wont to esteem us maids under twenty — nay, but as though I were his equal.

And thus he had brought to light all that lay hid in my soul. I had answered him on all points freely and gladly; yet, meanwhile, I had been on my guard not to let slip any heedless speech, deeming it a precious favor to stand well in the opinion of so noble and learned a gentleman.

And presently, when it was time for departing, he held my hand and pressed it; and, as he wrapped me in my cloak, he said in a low voice that, whereas he had thought it hard to make himself at home once more in our little native town, now, if I would, I might make Nuremberg as dear — nay, dearer to him than ever it had been of yore; and the hot blood boiled in my veins as I looked up at him beseechingly and bid him never mock me thus.

But he answered with all his heart that it was sacred earnest and that, if I would make home sweet to him and himself one of the happiest of mankind, I must be his, inasmuch as in all the lands of the earth he had seen nought so dear to him as the child whom he had found grown to be so sweet a maid, and, quoth he, if I loved him never so little, would I not give him some little token.

I looked into his eyes, and my heart was so full that no word could I say but his Christian name "Hans," whereas hitherto I had ever called him Master Haller. And meseemed that all the bells in the town together were ringing a merry peal; and he understood at once the intent of my brief answer, and murmured right loving words in mine ear. Then did

he walk home with me and Cousin Maud; and meseemed the honored mothers among our friends, who were wont so to bewail my loneliness as a motherless maid, had never looked upon me with so little kindness as that evening which love had made so blessed.

By next morning the tidings were in every mouth that a new couple had plighted their troth, and that the Hallers' three chevronells were to be quartered with the three links of the Schoppers.

Ann was the first to be told of my happiness, and whereas she had hitherto been steadfastly set on eschewing the great dances of the upper class so long as she was unwed, this time she did our will, for that she had no mind to spoil my pleasure by her absence.

Thus had Love taken up his abode with me likewise; and meseemed it was like a fair, still, blooming morning in the Forest. A pure, perfect, and peaceful gladness had opened in my soul, a way of seeing which lent sweetness and glory to all things far and wide, and joyful thanksgiving for that all things were so good.

As I looked back on that morning when Ann had flown to Herdegen's breast, and as I called to mind the turmoil of passion of which I had read in many a poem and love-tale, I weened that I had dreamed of somewhat else as the first blossoming of love in my heart, that I had looked to feel a fierce and glowing flame, a burning anguish, a wild and stormy fever. And yet, as it had come upon me, methought it was better; albeit the sun of my love had not risen in scarlet

fire, it was not therefore small nor cool; the image of my dear mother was ever-present with me; and me-thought that the love I felt was as pure and fair as though it had come upon me from her heavenly home.

And how loving and hearty was the welcome given me by my lover's parents, when they received me in their noble dwelling, and called me their dear daughter, and showed me all the treasures contained in the home of the Hallers'. In this fine house, with its broad fair gardens — a truly lordly dwelling, for which many a prince would have been fain to exchange his castle and hunting demesne — I was to rule as wife and mistress at the right hand of my Hans' mother, whose kind and dignified countenance pleased me well indeed, and by whose friendly lips I, an orphan, was so glad to be called "Child" and daughter. Nor were his worshipful father and his younger brethren one whit less dear to me. I was to become a member — nay, as the eldest son's wife, the female head — of one of the highest families in the town, of one whose sons would have a hand in its government so long as there should be a town-council in Nuremberg.

My lover had indeed been elected to sit in the *minor* council soon after his homecoming, being no longer a boy, but near on thirty years of age. And his manners befitted his years; dignified and modest, albeit cheerful and full of a young man's open-minded ardor for everything that was above the vulgar. With him, for certain, if with any man, might I grow to be all I desired to become; and could I but learn to rule

my fiery temper, I might hope to follow in the ways of his mother, whom he held above all other women.

The great dance, of which I have already made mention, and whither Ann had agreed to come with us, was the first I should go to with my well-beloved Hans. The worshipful Council had taken care to display all their best bravery in honor of the Emperor's envoys; they had indeed allied themselves with the constable of the Castle, the Prince Elector, to do all in their power to have the Assembly held at Nuremberg, rather than at Ratisbon, and to that end it was needful to win the good graces of the Ambassadors.

All the patricians and youth of the good city were gathered at the town-hall, and the beginning of the feast was pure enjoyment. The guests were indeed amazed at the richness of our great hall and civic treasure, as likewise at the brave apparel and great show of jewels worn by the gentlemen and ladies.

There were six envoys, and at their head was Duke Rumpold of Glogau; but among the knights in attendance on him I need only name that very Baron Franz von Welemisl who had been so sorely hurt out in the forest garden for my sake, and a Junker of Altmark, by name Henning von Beust, son of one of the rebellious houses who strove against the customs, laws, and rights over the marches, as claimed by our Lord Constable the Elector.

Baron Franz was now become chamberlain to the emperor and, albeit cured indeed of his wounds, was plagued by a bad cough. Still he could boast of the

same noble and knightly presence as of old, and his pale face, paler than ever I had known it, under his straight black hair, with the feeble tones of his soft voice, went right to many a maiden's heart; also his rich black dress, sparkling with fine gems, beseemed him well.

Presently, when he saw that Hans and I were plighted lovers, he feigned as though his heart were stricken to death; but I soon perceived that he could take comfort, and that he had bestowed the love he had once professed for me, with compound increase on Ursula Tetzel. She was ready enough to let him make love to her, and I wished the swarthy courtier all good speed with the damsel.

A dancing-hall is in all lands a stew full of fish, as it were, for gentlemen from court, and Junker Henning von Beust had no sooner come in than he began to angle; and whereas Sir Franz's bait was melancholy and mourning, the Junker strove to win hearts by sheer mirth and bold manners.

My lover himself had commended him to my favor by reason that the gentleman was lodging under his parents' roof; and he and I and Ann had found much pleasure these two days past in his light and open-hearted friendliness. Nought more merry indeed might be seen than this red-haired young nobleman, in parti-colored attire, with pointed scallops round the neck and arm-holes, which fluttered as he moved and many little bells twinkling merrily. Light and life beamed forth out of this gladsome youth's blue eyes. He had never

sat at a school-desk; while our boys had been poring over their books, he had been riding with his father at a hunt or a fray, or had lurked in ambush by the high-way for the laden wagons of those very "pepper sacks"* whose good wine and fair daughters he was so far from scorning in their own town-hall.

He had already fallen in love with Ann at the Hallerhof, and never quit her side although, after I had overheard certain sharp words by which Ursula Tetzel strove to lower the maid in his opinion, I told him plainly of what rank and birth she was.

For this he cared not one whit; nay, it increased his pleasure in making much of her and trying to spoil her shrewish foe's sport. It seemed as though he could never have enough of dancing with Ann, and so soon as the town pipers struck up, with cornets, trumpets, horns, and haut-boys, fiddles, sack-buts and rebecks, the rattle of drums and the groaning of bag-pipes, while the Swiss fifes squeaked shrilly above the clatter of the kettle-drums, methought the music itself flung him in the air and brought him low again. With his free and mirthful ways he carried all before him, and when presently it was plain to all that he could outdo our nimblest dancers, and was a master of each kind of dance which was held in favor at every court, whether of Brandenburg, of Saxony, of Bohemia, or at our own Emperor Sigismund's Hungarian court, he was ere long entreated to show us some new figures of the dance; nor was he loth to do so.

* A nickname for grocery merchants.

Nay, he presently went to such lengths that our Franconian and Nuremberg nobles could but turn away their faces, inasmuch as he began so wild and unseemly a dance as was overmuch even for me, despite my youth and sheer delight in the quick measure.

My Hans, the young councillor, took pleasure in leading me forth in the Polish dance, or with due dignity in the Swabian figure, but he held back, as was fitting, from the mad whirl of the gipsy dance and of the "Dove dance;" and he, and I likewise, courteously withstood his bidding to join in the Dance of the Dead as it was in use in Brandenburg, Hungary, and Schleswig: one has to lie for dead, and as he lieth another shall come to wake him with a kiss. On this Junker von Beust, who was, as the march-men say, the *dance-corpse*, entrapped Ann in a strange adventure. Ann kissed not his cheek, but in the air near by it, and the bold knave, who had no mind to forego so sweet a boon, declared to her after the dance was over that she was his debtor, and that he would give her no peace till she should pay him his due.

Ann courteously prayed him that he would be a merciful creditor and remit the payment of that she had indeed omitted, though truly out of no ill-will. And whereas he would by no means consent, the dispute was taken up by others present and Jörg Löffelholz devised the fancy of holding a Court of Love to decide the case.

This met with noisy approval, and albeit I and my dear Hans, and some others with us, made protest, the damsels were presently seated in a circle and Jörg

Löffelholz, who was chosen to preside, asked of each to pronounce sentence. Thus it came to the turn of Ursula Tetzel and she, looking round on Junker Henning or ever she spoke, said, with a proud curl of her red lips, that she could give no opinion, inasmuch as she only knew what beseemed young maids of noble birth.

On this the Junker answered with such high and grave dignity as I should not have looked for in so scatter-brained a wight: "The best patent of nobility, fair lady, is that of the maid to whom God Almighty has vouchsafed the gentlest soul and sweetest grace; and in all this assembly I have found none more richly endowed with both than the damsel against whom I in jest have made complaint. Wherefor I pray the presiding judge of this Court of Love to ask you once more for your verdict."

Ursula found this ill to brook; nevertheless her high spirit was ready to meet it. She laughed loudly, and with seeming lightness, as she hastily answered him: "Then you haughty lords of the marches allow not that it is in the Emperor's power to grant letters of nobility, but ascribe it to Heaven alone! A bold opinion. Howbeit, I care not for politics, and will pronounce my sentence. If it had been Margery Schopper, who had refused the kiss, or Elsa Ebner, or any one of us whose ancestors bore arms by grace of the Emperor, and not of the God of the Brandenburgers, I would have condemned her to give you, in lieu of one kiss, two, in the presence of witnesses; but

inasmuch as it is Mistress Ann Spiesz who has dared to withhold from a noble gentleman, a guest of the town, what we highborn damsels would readily have paid I grant her of our mercy, grace and leave to kiss the hand of Junker Henning von Beust, in token of penitence." The words were spoken clearly and steadfastly; all were silent, and I will confess that as Ursula gave her answer to the Junker with beaming eyes and quivering lips, never had I seen her more fair. It could plainly be seen by her heaving bosom how gladly she gave free vent to her old cherished grudge; and that she had in truth wounded the maid she hated to the very soul, Ann showed by her deathly paleness. Yet found she not a word in reply; and while Ursula was speaking, meseemed in the fullness of my wrath and grief as though a cloud were rising before my eyes. But so soon as she ceased and my eyes met the triumphant look in hers, my mind suddenly grew clear again, and never heeding the multitude that stood about us, I went a step forward, and cried: "We all thank you, Junker; you have taken the worthier part; the only part, Ursula," and I looked her sternly in the face, "the only part which I would have a friend of mine take, or any true heart."

The Junker bowed, and with a reproachful glance at Ursula he said: "Would to God I might never have a harder choice to make!" Whereupon he turned his back on her and went up to Ann; but Ursula again laughed loudly and called after him in defiance: "Oh! may heaven ever keep your wits clear when you have

to choose, and especially when you have to discern on the high-road betwixt what is your own and what belongs to other folks."

The blood mounted to the Junker's face, and, as with a hasty gesture he smoothed back the fierce hair on his lip, methought he might seem the same as when he rose in his saddle to rush down on our merchants' wains; for indeed it was the Beusts, with the Alvenslebens, their near kinsfolks, who had fallen upon the train of waggons belonging to the Muffels and the Tetzels, near Jüterbock, not a year ago.

But, hotly as his blood boiled, the Junker refrained himself, inasmuch as knightly courtesy forbade him to repay Ursula in the like coin; and as it fell Cousin Maud was enabled to aid him in this praiseworthy self-rule. She came forward with long strides, and her eyes flashed wrathful threats, till meseemed they were more fiery than the jewels in the tall plumes she wore on her head. She thrust aside the young men and maids who made up the Court of Love as a swift ship cuts through the small fry in the water. Without let or pause she pushed on, and as soon as she caught sight of Ann she seized her by the arm, stroked her hair and cheeks, and flung a few sharp words at Ursula: "I will talk to you presently!" Then she bid me remain behind with Hans and withdrew, carrying Ann with her, while Junker Henning followed praying to be forgiven for all the discomfort she had suffered by reason of him. This Ann gladly granted, and besought us and him alike to come with her no further.

When he came back to us Ursula, who was aggrieved by the looks of displeasure she met on all sides, cried out: "Back already, Sir Junker? If you had so lightly yielded your rights to kiss of *mine*, you may be certain that I would have appealed to any one who would do my behest to call you to account for such scorn!"

She eyed the young nobleman with a bold gaze, never weening that this challenge was all he waited for. He tossed his curly head, and cried with sparkling eyes: "Then, mistress, I would have you to know that I would take no kiss from you, even if you were to offer it. I have spoken — now call forth your champions."

He was silent a moment, and then, glancing round at the bystanders with defiant looks, he went on: "If any gentleman here present sets a higher price than I, the high-born Henning Beust, heir and Lord of Busta and Schadstett, on a kiss from the lips which have wronged my fair lady with spiteful speech, let him now stoop and pick up my glove. There it lies!"

And he flung it on the ground, while Ursula turned pale. Her eyes turned from one to another of the young gentlemen who paid her court and they were many — and the longer silence reigned the faster came her breath and the hotter waxed her ire. But on a sudden she was calm; her eyes had lighted on Sir Franz von Welemisl, and all might read what she demanded of him. The Bohemian understood her; he picked up the glove and muttered to the Junker with a shrug: "Mistress Ursula commands me!"

A look of pain passed over the brave youth's merry face, for that heretofore the young knight and he had been in good fellowship, and he hastily answered: "Nay, Sir Knight; I would have crossed swords with you readily enough or ever you had felt the prick of Swabian steel; but now you are not yet fully yourself again, and to fight with a friend who is sick is against the rule of my country."

The words were spoken from a kind and honest heart, and I saw in Sir Franz's face that he knew their intent was true; but as he put forth his hand to grasp the Junker's, Ursula tossed her head in high disdain. Sir Franz hastily changed his mien, and cried: "Then you will do well to act *against* the rule of your country, and fight the champion of the lady you have offended."

Here the dispute had an end, forasmuch as that my lord the duke, leader of the embassy, hearing the Brandenburger's fierce voice, came in haste from the supper-board to restore peace; and as he led away the Junker it was plain to all that he was taking him sharply to task. It was, in truth, a criminal misdeed in one of the Imperial envoy to cast down his glove at a dance, where he was the guest of a peaceful city; and that the duke imposed no severe penance for it the Junker might thank the worshipful members of the council who were present; they were indeed disposed to let well alone, inasmuch as they had it at heart to send the whole party home again well-pleased with Nuremberg.

The music was soon sounding merrily again in the

solemn town-hall, and of all the young folks who danced so gleefully, and laughed and chattered Ursula was the last to let it be seen how this grand revel had been troubled by her fault. Her eyes were bright with glad contentment, and she was so free with Sir Franz that it might have seemed that they would quit the town hall a plighted couple.

The festival was drawing to an end, and when I had danced the last dance, and was looking about me, I beheld to my amazement Ursula Tetzel in eager speech with Junker Henning. On our way home the young gentleman informed me that she had given him to understand that, during the meeting of the Imperial Assembly, he might look to be waited on by a noble youth who would pick up his glove in duty to her, and prove to him that there were other than sick champions glad to draw the sword for her.

The Brandenburger would fain have known with whom he would have to deal; but I held my peace, albeit I felt certain that Ursula had set her hopes on none other than my brother Herdegen.

On the morrow the whole of the Ambassadors' fellowship rode away, back to the emperor's court; I, for my part made my way to the Pernharts, where I found Ann amazed rather than wroth or distressed by Ursula's base attack. Also she was to have some amends; my dear godfather, Uncle Christian, with certain other gentlemen of the council, had notified old Tetzel that he was required to crave pardon of Ann and her stepfather for his daughter's haughty and reckless speech.

The proud and surly old man would have to submit to this penance without cavil, by reason that Pernhart had, since Saint Walpurgis' day, been a member of the council, and he and his family had part and share in the *patrician* festival. For, albeit craftsmen and petty merchants were excluded, the worshipful councillors chosen by the guilds enjoyed the same rights as those born to that high rank.

It was by mishap only that the coppersmith had not been at the town-hall yestereve, and on a later day, when he and his wife appeared there, they were among the finest of the elder couples. Ann did not, indeed, go with them; but it was neither vexation nor sorrow that kept her at home. My great gladness as it were warmed her likewise, and we were looking for Herdegen's speedy home-coming.

She looked forward to this with such firm hope as filled me with fears, when I minded me of my brother's letters, in which he never had aught to tell of but vain pleasures and pastimes.

My betrothal to Hans Haller was after his own heart; he wrote of him as of a man whose gifts and birth were worthy of me; and went on to say that he would follow his ensample, and, whereas he had renounced love in seeking a bride, he would take counsel of his head, and not of his heart, and quarter our ancient coat of arms with one no less noble.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THOUGH Ann's hopeful mood distressed me, these same hopes in my world-wise Aunt Jacoba raised my spirit; but again, when I heard my grand-uncle speak of Herdegen as his duteous son, it fell as low as before. The old man had shown much contentment at my plighting to Hans, and had given me a precious set of rubies as a wedding gift; yet could I scarce take pleasure in them, inasmuch as he told me then and there that he had the like in store for the noble damsel whom Herdegen should wed.

Cousin Maud was in great wrath, when she knew that we had it in our minds even yet to bring Ann and Herdegen together; howbeit this did not hinder her from being as kind to Ann as she was ever wont to be, and giving her pleasure with gifts great and small whenever she might. She had her own thoughts touching my brother's faithlessness. She deemed it a triumph of noble blood over the yearnings of his heart; and the more she loved to think well of her darling the more comfort she found in this interpretation.

Among those few who had known of his betrothal to Ann was the bee-master's widow, Dame Henneleinlein; and she had cradled herself so gladly in the hope of being ere long kin to a noble family, that its wreck-

ing filled her heart with bitter rage, and in all the houses whither she carried her honey she never failed to speak slander of Herdegen.

All this would never have troubled me, if only I might have rejoiced in the presence of my dear love; but alas! no more than three weeks after our betrothal he was sent, as squire to Master Erhart Schürstab, away to court, where they were to lay before the Emperor Sigismund in the name of Nuremberg the various hindrances in the way of our trafficking with Venice, whereas since the late war his Majesty had been mightily ill-disposed towards that great and famous city.

There was no remedy but patience; my lover wrote to me often, and his loving letters would have filled me with joy, if it had not been that in each one there was ever some sad tidings of Junker Henning, whom I yet held in high esteem. This young lord, who was in attendance on his Majesty — who never held his court for more than a few days at the same place — or ever he left Vienna to go to Ratisbon, had made a close friendship with my plighted master, and had been serviceable to him in all things wherein he might; and Hans had said of him that he was one in whom there was no guile, with the open heart and bright temper of a child. Such an one, indeed, was his; yet, in the midst of the gayest mirth, his grief of heart would so mightily come upon him that he fell into a sudden gloom; and out of the fulness of his sorrow he confessed to Hans that he could never cease

to think of Ann. Whereupon my dear love conceived that it must be his woeful duty to tell his friend that the lady of his choice had no free heart to give him. Yet to the Junker's question whether she were plighted to another, and whether he were minded to wed her, Hans was forced in truth to say nay. This gave the lovesick youth new courage, and at length he went so far as that Hans enquired of me whether Ann might not after all be willing to give up Herdegen, who well deserved it at her hands, and to take pity on so brave and true-hearted a lover as the Junker.

To this I could make no answer other than: "Never — never;" inasmuch as, having shown Ann this letter, and, moreover, loudly sung the praise of her suitor, she asked me right sadly whether I was weary of confirming her in her love for my brother; and when I eagerly denied this, she cried: "And you know me well! And you must know that nothing on earth — nor you, nor Mistress Jacoba, nor all Nuremberg, could turn my heart from my love!"

This did I forthwith write to Hans; but that letter never reached him, and thus was he delivered from the grievous duty of robbing the Junker of his last hope.

Alas, my Hans! How sorely I did long for thee every hour! And yet shall I ever remember the month of June in that year with thankfulness.

Day after day did we maidens sit in the Hallers' garden, for Hans' worthy mother had soon taken Ann into her heart, and it became a fear to me ere long lest her rare beauty should turn the head of his younger

brother Paulus, a likely lad of nineteen. As the summer waxed hot we went into the forest at the bidding of my uncle and aunt, who took great joy in seeing their favorite in right good heart and wondrous beauty, Mistress Giovanna having provided her with seemly and brave apparel. Nor was there any lack of good fellowship; many young noblemen bore us company, and whereas the town was full of illustrious guests, many of them found their way out to the forest.

This was by reason that the Prince Electors and the other rulers of the Empire, and foremost of them all our High Constable, had, indeed, declared that the great Assembly should be held at Nuremberg and not at Ratisbon; and when they were all gathered in our good town, the Emperor Sigismund, after he had waited for five days at Ratisbon, was fain at last, whether or no, to follow them hither. Then had his Chamberlains been sent before him, and among them again came Duke Rumpold von Glogau and Junker Henning von Beust, while his Majesty kept my Hans still about his person. Now, when the Emperor's forerunners had fulfilled their duties, they likewise were bidden to the forest-lodge; and with them came the lord of Eberstein, and an Italian *Conte*, Fazio di Puppi, both well-skilled in song and the lute. Yet was my brother Herdegen still absent, albeit we had looked for him at Whitsuntide.

Cousin Maud bided at home, where there was much to be done in preparing fitting cheer for the noble fellowship who were to be lodged in the Schopperhof;

nay, the old house was to be decked outside with a festal dress, in obedience to the behest of the town-council that every citizen should do his utmost so to cleanse and adorn his house, that it should please the eyes of his Majesty the Emperor.

Towards evening on Saint Liborius' day,* my lord the Duke came forth on horseback to the forest lodge, and as I write, I can see the beaming countenance of Junker Henning as he greeted Ann; she, however, took his devoted demeanor coolly and courteously, yet could she not hinder him from coming between her and the other gentlemen in an over-marked way. The company was a large one for us two maidens, and there was none other with us save Elsa Ebner, our best-beloved schoolmate, and on her young Master Jörg Löffelholz had cast his eyes.

Not long after dinner Akusch came to me with the tidings that Herdegen had ridden into Nuremberg yestereve. My grand-uncle, to whom he had sent word of his coming, had gone forth to meet him on the way, and, with him Jost Tetzel and his daughter Ursula. My brother had alighted at the Im Hoff's house, and had waited on Cousin Maud this morning early. In the afternoon it was his intent to come out to the forest with my uncle's leave, to see me.

When I repeated all this to Aunt Jacoba, she was mightily disturbed and bid me stand by Ann, and in all points obey the counsel she might find it good to give her. She desired I would fetch my friend to her

* July 23rd.

forthwith, and then made a plan for all the young folks to go forth to the fair garden of a certain bee-keeper, one Martein, where flowers grew in great abundance, and where we might wind the wreaths which Uncle Christian would need to grace the Empress' chambers withal. Thither, quoth she, would she send Herdegen on his coming; for she knew full well that the tidings brought by Akusch could not remain hid.

Whereas Ann turned a little paler, my aunt shook her head in displeasure, and admonished her to remain calm; albeit she had charges to bring against that wild youth, yet, for the present, she must keep them to herself. Least of all was she to let him suppose that his faithlessness had caused her any bitter heart-ache; if she desired that matters end rightly she must command herself to receive the home-comer no more than kindly, and to demean her as though his denying of her had touched her but lightly; nay, as though it were a pleasure to her vanity to be courted by the Brandenburg Junker and other noble gentlemen. If she could but seem to rate him as less than either of them, she would have won a great part of the victory.

Such subtlety had no charm for Ann; howbeit, my aunt gave no place to her doubting, and once more her urgent eloquence prevailed on the sorrowing maid to govern the yearning of her soul; and when I promised my friend to support her, she gave the wise lady, who had shown her such plain proofs of her devoted friendship, her word that she would in every point obey her.

Many a time have we seen, in the churches of Nuremberg, certain acting of plays wherein right honest and worthy persons have appeared as Judas Iscariot, or even as the very Devil himself; and at Venice likewise have I seen such plays, called there *Bombaria*, wherein men and women, innocent of all guilt, were made to stand for Calumny, Cruelty, and Craft; and that so cunningly that a man might swear that they were reprobate Knaves full ripe for the gallows. From this it may be seen that men are fit and able to seem other than they are by nature; nay, such feigning is a pleasure to most folks, as we plainly see from the delight taken by great and small alike in mummery at Carnival tide. Howbeit, they can scarce have their heart in such sport; and for my part, meseemeth that to play such a part as my aunt had set before Ann is one of the hardest that can be laid upon a pure-hearted and truthful maid. At the time I wist not clearly what was the end of such rash trifling; but now, when I know men better, meseems it was well conceived, and could not fail of its intent, albeit the course of events made it plain to my understanding how little the thoughts and plans of the wisest can avail when Heaven rules otherwise.

The gentlemen in the hall were more than ready to agree to our bidding; yet none but I could guess what made Ann's lip to quiver from time to time, while her gay spirit charmed the young men who bore us company through the woods to the beekeeper's garden.

I and Elsa cut the flowers helped by Jörg Löffelholz,

while Ann sat under a shady lime-tree hard by an arbor of honeysuckle, and showed the others, who lay on the grass about her; how to wind a garland. Each one was ready to be taught by lips so sweet, and in guiding of fingers and words of praise or blame, there was right merry laughing and chatter and pastime.

Junker Henning lay at her feet, and near him my Hans' brother Paulus, and young Master Holzschuher. The Knight von Eberstein had fetched him a stool out from the beekeeper's house, and twisted and tied with great zeal; the Italian *Conte*, Fagio di Puppi, struck the mandoline, which he called "the lady of his heart" from whom he never parted even on the longest journey.

When Elsa and I had flowers enough, we sat down with the others, and it was pleasant there to rest in the shade of the lime-tree, whose leaves fluttered in a soft air, while bees and butterflies hovered above the flowers in the warm sunshine. The birds sang no more; they had finished nesting long ago; but we, with our young hearts overfull of love, were in the right mind for song, and when Puppi had charmed us with a sweet Italian lay, and I had decked his lute with a rose as a guerdon, my lord of Eberstein took example from him, and they then besought Ann and me to do our part; but Junker Henning was the more eager. Whereupon Ann smiled on him so graciously that I was in pain for him, and she signed to me, and, I taking the lower part as was our wont, we gave Prince Wizlav's "Song to Dame Love." It rang out right loud and

clear from our throats over the gentlemen s heads as they sat at our feet, and through the garden close:

"Earth is set free and flowers
In all the meads are springing,
The balmy noontide hours
Are sweet with odors rare;
The hills for joy are leaping,
The happy birds are singing,
And now, while winds are sleeping,
Soar through the sunny air.

Now hearts begin to kindle
And burn with love's sweet anguish
As tapers blaze and dwindle.
Love, our lady! lend thine ear!
Would'st thou but spoil our pleasure?
Ah, leave us not to languish!
Who vows to thee his treasure,
Haughty lady, must beware."

We had sung so much as this when the sound of hoofs, of which we had already been aware on the soft soil of the woods, gave us pause. Then, behold! Ann turned pale and pressed her hands, full of the roses she had chosen for her garland, tightly to her bosom, as though in pain. Junker Henning, who, while she sang, had gazed at her devoutly, nay, in rapture, marked this gesture and leaped to his feet to succour her; but she commanded herself with wonderful readiness, and laughed as she showed him her finger, from which two drops of blood had fallen on her white gown. And

while the garden-gate was opening, she held out her hand to the young man, saying in haste: "Pricked, — a thorn! — would you please to take it out for me, Junker?"

He seized her hand and held it long in his own, as some jewel or marvel, before he remembered that he was required to take out the thorn. The other gentlemen, and among them my brother-in-law Paulus, had likewise sprung forward to lend their aid; he, indeed, had snatched his lace neck-tie off and dipped it in the fountain.

Meanwhile the new-comers had joined the circle: First, Duke Rumpold, then Jost Tetzel, and lastly Herdegen with Ursula.

I flew to meet him, and when he held me in his arms and kissed me, and wished me joy of my betrothal right heartily, I forgot all old grievances and only rejoiced at having him home once more; till Ursula greeted me, and Herdegen came in sight of Ann. She had remained sitting under the lime-tree, on a saddle cushion of blue velvet, as on a throne; and in truth meseemed she might have been a queen, as she graciously accepted the service of the gentlemen who had been so moved by her pricked finger. The Junker wrapped it with care in a green leaf which, as his lady grandmother had taught him, had a healing gift; Paulus held forth the laced kerchief, and the Italian was striking wailing tones from his lute.

All this to-do, at any other time would, for a certainty, have made sport for me, but now laughing was

far from me, and I had no eyes but for Ann in her little court, and for my brother.

At first she feigned as though she saw him not; and whereas the Junker still held her hand, she hit his fingers with a pink, albeit she was never apt to use such unseemly freedom.

Then she first marked my lord the duke, and rose to greet him with a courteous reverence, and not till she had bowed coldly and curtly to Tetzel and his daughter did she seem to be aware that Herdegen was of the company. At that moment I minded me of the morning when Love had thrown her into his arms, and it was with pain and wonder that I marked her further demeanor. In truth it outdid all I could have dreamed of: she held out her hand with an inviting smile, bid him welcome home and to the forest, reproved him for staying so long away from me, his dear little sister, and our good cousin, and then turned her back upon him to desire the Junker to place her cushions aright. Therewith she gave this young gentleman her hand to support her to her seat, and asked him whether, in his country, they did not do service and devoir to the divine Dame *Musica?* And whereas he replied that verily they did, that in his own land he had heard many a sweet ditty sung by noble ladies to the harp and lute, that the children would ever sing at their sports, and that he, too, had oftentimes uplifted his voice in singing of madrigals, she besought him that he would make proof of some ballad or song. The rest of the company joining in her entreaties she left him no

peace till he gave way to her desire, and after that he had protested that his singing was no better than the twitter of a starling or a bullfinch, and his ditty only such as he remembered from his boyhood's time, he sang the song "It rained on the bridge and I was wet" in a voice neither loud nor fine, but purely, and with great modesty.

Ann highly lauded this simple and right childish ditty, and said that she felt certain that she, by her teaching, could make a fine singer of the Junker.

The others were of the same opinion, and Herdegen, meanwhile, who was standing somewhat apart, with Ursula, looked on, marvelling greatly as though he could not believe what his ear heard and his eye beheld.

Then, inasmuch as my lord duke desired to hear more music made, we were ready enough to obey and uplifted our voices, while he leaned on an easy couch, listening diligently, and gave us the guerdon of his gracious praise.

Still, as heretofore, many were obedient to Ann's lightest sign, but never till now had I seen her proud of her power and so eager to use it. Now and again she would turn to Herdegen with some light word and a free demeanor, yet he, it was plain, would not vouchsafe to take his seat before her with the rest.

Nay, meseemed that he and Ursula had no part with us; inasmuch as that she was arrayed in velvet and rich brocade, and a bower, as it were, of yellow and purple ostrich plumes curled above her riding-hat.

Herdegen likewise was in brave array, after the fashion of the French, and a bunch of tall feathers stood up above his head, being held in a silken fillet that bound his hair. His cross-belt was set with gems and hung with little bells, tinkling as he moved and jarring with our song; and in this hot summer-tide it could not have been for his easement that he wore the tagged lappets, which fell, a hand-breadth deep, from his shoulders over the sleeves of his velvet tunic.

The more gleefully we sang and the more it was made plain that we, to all seeming, were only to obey the wishes of Ann and of his highness the duke, the less could my brother refrain himself to hide his ill-pleasure; and when presently the Junker besought Ann that she would sing "Tanderadei," which she very readily did, Herdegen could bear no more; he asked the Italian to lend him his mandoline, and struck the strings as though merely for his own good pleasure. Whereupon Ann turned to him and courteously entreated him for a song, and he asking her which song she would have, she hastily replied: "Your old ditties are already known to me, Junker Schopper; and, to judge by your seeming, you now take no pleasure save in French music. Let us then hear somewhat of the latest Paris fashion."

To this he replied, however: "Here, in my own land, I would like better to sing in my own tongue, by your gracious leave, fair mistress."

Then bowing to Ursula and to me, without even casting a glance at Ann, he went on to say: "And

seeing that methinks you love madrigals, I will sing a Franconian ditty after the Junker's Brandenburg ballad."

He boldly struck the strings, and the little birds, which by this time had gone to rest in the linden-tree, again uplifted their little heads, and all that had ears and soul, near and far, Ann not the least, hearkened as he began with his clear voice and noble skill.

"To all this goodly company
I sing as best I may,
A madrigal of ladies fair
And damsels soote and gay.
Through many countries great and small
I roam, and ladies fair I see
Many! but fairest of them all
The maidens of my own countree.
The maidens of Franconia
I ever love to meet,
They dwell in fond remembrance
A vision ever sweet.
Of maids they are the crown and pearl!
And if I might but spin them
I would make the spindle whirl!"

My lord duke clapped hearty praise of the singer, and we all did the same; all save Junker Henning, who had not failed to mark that Herdegen had striven to out-do his modest warble, and likewise the ardent eyes he turned on the lady of his choice. Hence he moved not. Ann clapped her hands but lightly, sat looking into her lap, and for some time could say not

a word; indeed, if she had trusted herself to speak the game would of a certainty have been lost.

The knight of Eberstein it was, who ere long, albeit unwittingly, came to her aid; he challenged Ursula to give us a song in thanks to Junker Herdegen's praise of the maids of Franconia.

The damsel thought to do somewhat fine by making choice, instead of a German song, of a French lay by the Sieur de Machault "*J'aim la flour*," which was well known to all of us by reason that she had learnt it from old Veit Spiesz, Ann's grandfather; and she had no need to fear to uplift her voice, inasmuch as it was strong and as clear as a bell. But she sang over-loud and with a mode of speech which made Herdegen smile, and I can see her now as she stood upright in her fine yellow and purple garb, singing the light-tripping ditty:

"J'aim la flour
De valour
Sans falour
Et l'aour
Nuit et jour."

with all her might, as though stirring them to battle.

The folly of so wrong-headed a fashion of singing such words was plain to Ann, in whose very blood, as it were, lay all that was most choice in musical feeling, and Herdegen's smile brought her a calmer mind again.

When, presently, Ursula, believing that she had done somewhat marvellous, boldly turned upon Ann

and besought her to sing — as though there had never been a breach between the twain — Ann refused, as not caring but yet firm in her mind. Then the Duke, who was even yet a fine singer and bore in mind how Ursula had demeaned herself towards Ann at the great dance, desired to have the lute and sang the song as follows:

"Behold a lady sweet and fair
In simple dress,
But right well clothed upon is she
With seemliness.
By her do flowers seem less bright,
And she is such a glorious sight
As, on May morns, the golden sun which lights up hill and lea—
But froward maids delight us not, with all their bravery."

And he sang the little verse to Ann as though it were in her praise, till at the last line, which fell from his lips as it were in scorn, he cast a reproving glance at Ursula, and many an one might see and feel how well the song befitted one and the other of the hostile damsels.

Yet was it hard to guess what Ursula was thinking of all this; she thanked the Duke right freely for his fine song which held up the mirror to all froward ladies. At the same time she looked steadfastly at Ann, and led both Herdegen and the Knight of Eberstein to talk with herself; yet how often all the time did my brother cast his eyes at his heart's beloved, whom he had betrayed.

As for myself, I can call to mind little enough of all that was said, for the most part concerning the flowers and trees in the garden. Only Ann and my brother dwell in my memory, each feigning neither to see nor to hear the other, while covertly each had not eyes nor ears for any other. Yes, and I mind me how my brother's unrest and distress so filled me now with joy and now with pity, that I longed to cry out to the Junker that this was a base trick they were playing on him, inasmuch as Ann poured oil and more oil on the flame of his love.

And there stood old Tetzel and his daughter, and it was plain to see that they deemed that they had Herdegen safe in their toils; nay, it seemed likely enough that he had done his uncle's bidding and was already betrothed to her. Howbeit this strange lover had up to that moment cast not one loving look on his lady love.

What should come of it all? How could I ever find peace and comfort in so perverse a world, and amid this feigning which had turned upside down all that heretofore had seemed upright? Whichever way I turned there were things which I did not crave to see, and the saints know full well that I gazed not round about me; nay, that my eyes were set on two small specks plain to be seen — the two drops of blood which had fallen from Ann's finger, and which were now two dark, round spots on her white gown; and, as it grew dusk, meseemed they waxed blacker and greater.

At length, to my great joy, my lord the Duke rose and made as though he were departing; whereupon the false image vanished, and I beheld Ann giving her hand with a witching smile to Junker Henning, that he might help her to rise.

Supper was waiting for us at the Forest lodge. My Aunt Jacoba placed the Duke in the seat of honor at her right hand, with Ann and Junker Henning next to him. Herdegen she sent to the other end of the table to sit near his uncle, and Ursula far from him near the middle; to the end that it might be clearly seen that she knew naught of any alliance between that damsel and her nephew.

During that meal my squire had little cause to be pleased with his lady. The foolish sport begun in the garden was yet carried on and I liked it not, no more than my brother's French bravery; at table he appeared in a long red and blue garment of costly silken stuff, with a cord round the middle instead of a belt, so that it was for all the world like the loose gown which was worn by our *Magister* and by many a worthy citizen when taking his easement in his own home.

Besides all this, my heart was heavy with longing for my own true love, and my eyes filled with tears a many times, also I thanked the Saints with all my heart when at length my aunt left the table.

When we were outside she asked me privily whether Ann had rightly played her part; to which I answered: "Only too well."

Herdegen, also, so soon as he had bid good night to Ursula, led me aside and desired to know what had come upon Ann. To this I hastily replied that of a surety he could not care to know, inasmuch as he had broken troth with her. Thereat he was vexed and answered that as matters were, so might they remain; but that he was somewhat amazed to mark how lightly she had got over that which had spoiled many a day and night for him.

Then I asked him whether he had in truth rather have found her in woe and grief, and would fain have had her young days saddened for love of him? He broke in suddenly, declaring that he knew full well that he had no right to hinder her in any matter, but that one thing he could not bear, and that was that she, whom he had revered as a saint, should now demean herself no more nobly nor otherwise than any other maid might. On this I asked him wherefor he had denied his saint; nay, for the sake — as it would seem — of a maid who was, for sure, the worldliest of us all. And, to end, I boldly enquired of him how matters stood betwixt him and Ursula; but all the answer I got was that first he must know whether Ann were in earnest with the Junker. On this I said in mockery that he would do well to seek out the truth of that matter to the very bottom; and running up the steps by which we were standing, I kissed my hand to him from the first turning and wished him a good night's rest.

Up in our chamber I found Ann greatly disturbed.

She, who was commonly so calm, was walking up and down the narrow space without pause or ceasing; and seeing how sorely her fears and her conscience were distressing her, pity compelled me to forego my intent of not giving her any hopes; I revealed to her that I had discovered that my Herdegen's heart was yet hers in spite of Ursula.

This comforted her somewhat; but yet could it not restore her peace of mind. Meseemed that the ruthless work she had done that day had but now come home to her; she could not refrain herself from tears when she confessed that Herdegen had privily besought her to grant him brief speech with her, and that she had brought herself to refuse him.

All this was told in a whisper; only a thin wall of wood parted Ursula's chamber from ours. As yet there was no hope of sleep, inasmuch as that the noise made by the gentlemen at their carouse came up loud and clear through the open window and, the later it grew, the louder waxed Herdegen's voice and the Junker's, above all others. And I knew what hour the clocks must have told when my brother shouted louder than ever the old chorus:

"Bibit heres, bibit herus
Bibit miles, bibit clerus
Bibit ille, bibit illa
Bibit servus cum ancilla.
Bibit soror, bibit frater
Bibit anus, bibit mater

Bibit ista, bibit ille:
Bibunt centem, bibunt mille."*

Nor was this the end. The Latin tongue of this song may peradventure have roused Junker Henning to make a display of learning on his part, and in a voice which had won no mellowness from the stout Brandenburg ale — which is yclept "Death and murder" — or from the fiery Hippocras he had been drinking he carolled forth the wanton verse:

"*Per transivit clericus*
Beneath the greenwood shade;
Invenit ibi stantem,
A fair and pleasant maid;
Salve mi puella,
Hail thou sweetest she;
Dico tibi vere
Thou my love shalt be!"

The rest of the song was not to be understood whereas Herdegen likewise sang at the same time, as though he would fain silence the other:

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* The heir drinks, the owner drinks,
The soldier and the clerk,
He drinks, she drinks,
The servant and the wench.
The sister drinks and eke the brother,
The grand dam and the gaffer,
This one drinks, that one drinks,
A hundred drink — a thousand!

"Fair Lady, oh, my Lady!
I would I were with thee,
But two deep rolling rivers
Flow down 'twixt thee and me."

And as Herdegen sang the last lines:

"But time may change, my Lady,
And joy may yet be mine,
And sorrow turn to gladness
My sweetest Elselein!"

I heard the Junker roar out "Annelein;" and thereupon a great tumult, and my Uncle Conrad's voice, and then again much turmoil and moving of benches till all was silence.

Even then sleep visited us not, and that which had been doing below was as great a distress to me as my fears for my lover. That Ann likewise never closed an eye is beyond all doubt, for when the riot beneath us waxed so loud she wailed in grief: "Oh, merciful Virgin!" or "How shall all this end?" again and again.

Nay, nor did Ursula sleep; and through the boarded wall I could not fail to hear well-nigh every word of the prayers in which she entreated her patron saint, beseeching her fervently to grant her to be loved by Herdegen, whose heart from his youth up had by right been hers alone, and invoking ruin on the false wench who had dared to rob her of that treasure.

I was right frightened to hear this and, in truth, for the first time I felt honest pity for Ursula.

END OF VOL. I.